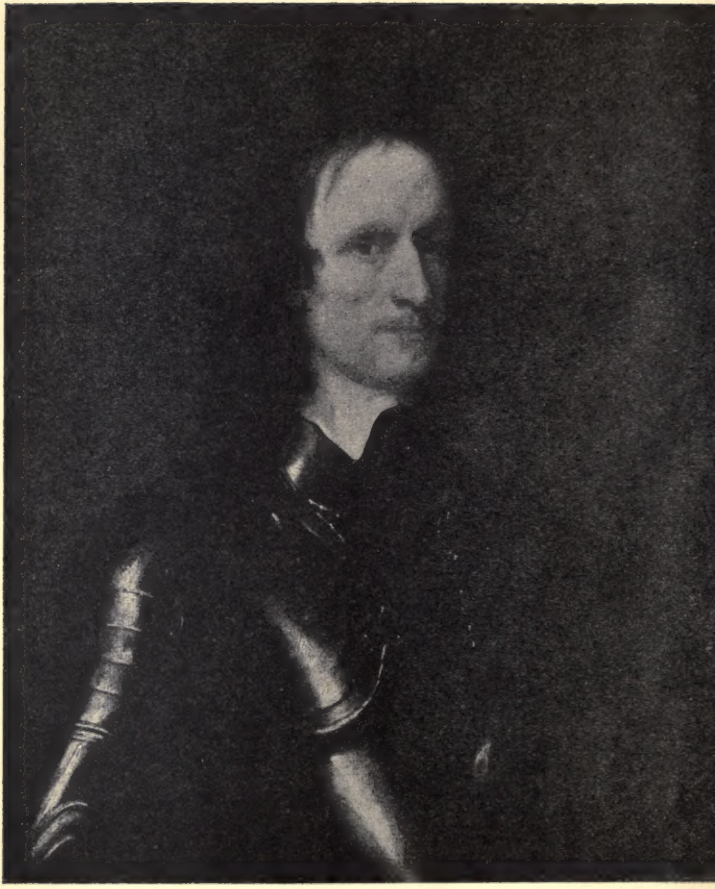
BUCKS BIOGRAPHIES



JOHN HAMPDEN
From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

BUCKS BIOGRAPHIES

A SCHOOL BOOK

BY

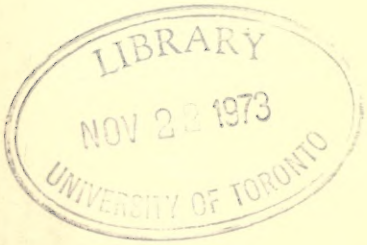
MARGARET M. VERNEY

BUCKS C. C. EDUCATION COMMITTEE

'No land in all the world hath memories of nobler children.'

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1912

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH, NEW YORK
TORONTO AND MELBOURNE



DEDICATED TO

THE CHILDREN OF THE COUNTY

THAT THE EXAMPLE OF

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF YESTERDAY

MAY HELP THEM IN MAKING THE COUNTY HISTORY

OF TO-MORROW

M. M. V.
CLAYDON, 1911

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INTRODUCTION

THE revival of pageants, and their success, has shown us how interesting local history may be made if the events connected with a town or county are illustrated in a series of striking scenes.

No written words can arrest the attention of children as do these living pictures, but the pageants give us a hint that a set of historical vignettes and the lives of a few famous men and women may be more interesting than a connected history condensed within the limits of a school reading-book.

The recent remarkable progress in the Schools of the county, in Nature study and drawing from Nature, have made the Bucks child well acquainted with the trees, flowers, and birds of the neighbourhood, with the conditions of vegetable growth in the educational school-garden, and with the geography of the parish.

It is desirable that this spirit of observation and of original research which appeals to every intelligent child, should be extended to the human interests of the community past and present. Both the domestic and church architecture of Bucks are very interesting; there are Jacobean manor-houses, now usually farm-houses, and admirable specimens of Queen Anne and Georgian houses in the market towns; while the beautiful old cottages in the villages repay attention at least as much as the homes of the birds and the spiders.

Brasses with mediaeval costumes, monuments in stone and marble, the parish registers, the porches, fonts, windows and bells in many of our village churches, offer points of historical interest generally unexplored by the children living in the parish. The study of social customs, the changes from hand to machine work, the growth or the decay of local trades, the prevalent names and surnames

often confined to a small district, the dialect names for wild and garden flowers, rimes, proverbs and stories still to be gleaned from the older generation—all this information to be gained not from books, but by the children's own observation, and where possible illustrated by their drawings, would give fresh zest to country life from the historical point of view, and new topics for school compositions.

The bird and tree competitions and kindred efforts have sent the children to Nature, the Empire Day celebrations have widened their horizon; but in our English counties, so full of historical associations, there is a rich inheritance of human and social interest still to be possessed by the young generation.

Buckinghamshire does not at first sight offer any very dramatic material. Far from the heroism and adventure of the sea-coast, it is a county of rich pasture land, fine dairy cows, prime beef and fat ducks; of hedgerow elms, oaks and beech-woods; of gentle undulations, culminating in the considerable chalk-ridge of the Chilterns, bordered by the silvery Thames and intersected by the slow winding Ouse.

Aylesbury, Buckingham, Stony Stratford, Newport Pagnell, Amersham, Chesham, and Marlow are among the picturesque old market towns unspoilt by modern progress.

Agriculture has always been the chief Bucks industry, but the railway has created a centre of skilled work at Wolverton; Olney has a boot-factory; and the old borough of Wycombe has a growing trade in chair-making. The nearness to London and the admirable sites for villas have given to part of South Bucks something of a suburban character; Slough has an increasing population, but nothing can spoil the glorious beech-woods and the river scenery; and Bucks can claim to be a typical rural county of the Midlands.

Bucks possessed a royal residence under several of the Plantagenet kings, but when security from attack was no longer the chief consideration in the choice of a palace, the impregnable site of Brill had to yield to the charms of Windsor.

Bucks soldiers and sailors have distinguished themselves all over the world, but no great battle, since Saxon times,

has been fought within its borders. In the Civil War there were sieges of private houses, and much marching and countermarching of the opposing forces over its meadows.

Attached for centuries to the distant see of Lincoln, the county had no great abbey or cathedral or university, though in Eton College it has boasted of the most famous public school in England or in the world.

It was, perhaps, the absence of king, abbot, and bishop which contributed to a spirit of sturdy independence, and made Bucks the home of many unpopular causes. Lollards, Calvinists, Quakers, Independents, and Baptists here early found a refuge, and according to Fuller, Bucks had 'before the time of Luther more martyrs and confessors than all England beside'. John Knox preached at Amersham, and Richard Baxter held there a theological field-day. John Bunyan served as a private soldier at Newport Pagnell. The old Catholic faith has had its confessors and martyrs; the Throckmortons and their neighbours at Weston Underwood were unmoved by the Reformation; and Sir Everard Digby of Gayhurst was one of the authors of the Gunpowder Plot.

Many learned and saintly divines and schoolmasters have been numbered amongst the Bucks clergy of the Church of England. Wycliffe, Hooker, and Sheldon have been among her parish priests; Dean Colet endowed St. Paul's School from his property in the county; Dr. Busby, the great Head Master of Westminster School, had property at Willen and relatives at Addington; Brett, 'the learned Rector of Quainton', was one of the translators of the Bible of 1611; Atterbury was born at Milton Keynes, of which his father was rector; Newton of Olney, Scott, the commentator, of Aston Sandford, and Spencer Thornton, of Wendover, were distinguished in the Evangelical movement. When the Oxford Revival came, Bucks possessed her own great architect in Sir Gilbert Scott, son of the Vicar of Gawcott, who gave ungrudgingly his time and money to the restoration of the old Gothic churches.

It is the singular good fortune of this county that one of her country churches, and incidentally the village life which centred round it, have been described by such a poet as Gray, and her scenery and manners by so loving a student

as Cowper. Indeed it is remarkable how many poets and writers are connected with Bucks. Milton, the greatest of them all, dreamt of Paradise in the peaceful scenery of the Chalfonts; Sir John Denham is associated with Boarstall; Waller wrote under his oak at Coleshill; Dryden at Denham Court as the guest of Sir William Bowyer; Pope and Thomson were inspired by the 'paradise of Stowe'. At Beaconsfield, Crabbe found a haven of rest; Shelley, 'the Hermit of Marlow', wrote there, as also his friend Peacock; Gibbon owned the manor of Lenborough; Praed was member for Aylesbury; Frank Smedley (a cripple from childhood), the brave author of *Frank Fairleigh*, wrote at Marlow; Captain Mayne Reid, the friend of boys, at Gerrard's Cross; Shirley Brooks, the genial editor of *Punch*, was born at Brill in 1816; Sir Walter Scott was a constant guest at Ditton Park.

Sir Isaac Newton frequently visited his relations at Lavendon Grange; and it was from the quiet of a Bucks garden that Herschel found the planet Uranus.

Captain Cook, who sailed round the world, used to stay at Denham Place; Sir James Ross, the Arctic explorer, ended his life's long voyages at Aston Abbots; Professor Richard Owen's boyhood was spent at Fulmer Place, in the house built by his great-grandfather.

The political record of the county is a splendid one. Was not the table long kept at Datchet on which King John signed Magna Carta on the Island of Runnymede in the parish? The same spirit that gained the Charter made Hampden resist the Ship-money, and sent 4,000 Bucks freeholders riding up to London with their own remonstrance. There were many devoted Cavaliers in the country houses, but the county generally sided with the Parliament; and though Bucks men, wearied with uncertainty, rejoiced in the Restoration, they were up in arms against the encroachments of James II and won the famous election of 1685 against Judge Jeffreys, as is told by Macaulay. Aylesbury supported her townsman Wilkes, when he stood for liberty of election; Stowe gave two Prime Ministers to England in George and William Grenville; Burke was both a Bucks M.P. and a resident in the county; Canning was Member for Wendover, and in Victoria's days Bucks was

proud in the possession of a Prime Minister who loved to identify himself with the county and its interests, and all England listened while Lord Beaconsfield poured forth his wit and wisdom at the Farmers' Ordinary at Aylesbury; the Right Hon. W. H. Smith resided in South Bucks, and the Earl of Rosebery has a home at Mentmore.

The Bucks regiments and the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers have taken an honourable share in the story of the county and the empire; and the first Staff College was started here.

We have a long roll of Bucks Physicians and Surgeons; Florence Nightingale spent some time at Claydon and worked with the County Council.

Mr. A. Morley Davies, D.Sc., F.G.S., of Amersham, is preparing a School Geography of Bucks, dealing with its topography, natural history, and antiquities, as one of a series published by the Cambridge University; in this volume, it is proposed to deal with the historical and biographical associations of the county; it is hoped that the two books may be used together in the schools as representing two different aspects of local study. A list of books for wider reading on the subjects treated will be found at the end of the volume.

My thanks are due to the following authors and publishers for leave to quote from the books mentioned below :—

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And also to Admiral PIGOTT, Rev. MACKWOOD STEVENS, and Rev. P. CAUTLEY.

CHAPTER I

OF SAXON KINGS, SAINTS, AND LEGENDS

THE Roman occupation had done much for Britain. In Bucks, forests had been cleared, marshes drained, good roads like Akeman Street and Watling Street traversed the county; many useful trees and shrubs were brought from abroad, and sheep-farming was introduced. The remains of gardens and villas belonging to rich Roman families have been found at High Wycombe, Foxcote (near Buckingham), and at Tingewick; Roman pottery and coins at Brill, Boarstall, Olney, Winslow, Steeple Claydon, and elsewhere. As early as the first century Christianity reached Britain, and from this old British Church sprang the early Celtic Churches of Ireland and Wales, who nobly repaid the debt they owed, by missionary work in the mother country, when Christianity had been wellnigh extinguished by wave after wave of heathen invasion by Saxons, Jutes, Angles, and Danes.

The first six hundred years of our history are full of cruel wars; 'in the early rough times of a nation's life, unless it can fight well, it has but a poor chance of living at all, in the struggle going on around it.' The names that remain to us are those of soldier-kings and leaders, and side by side with them the churchmen and missionaries, often women, who in gentler ways, but with equal courage, were labouring and dying to establish the kingdom of Christ. In Bucks the course of the Ouse and the range of the Chilterns play an important part in the fighting. There is a legend of a battle at Great Kimble in which the two sons of Cymbeline, the British chief, were killed; he had a palace at Velvet Lawn.

The name of Cymbeline is great in legendary story. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle, a storehouse of heroic

tales, written about 1147, is a version of the story according to which Cymbeline was the grandson of Lud, the founder of London, still remembered in the name Ludgate Hill; he was a great British soldier, brought up in Rome about the time of Christ; he governed Britain well and justly. Cymbeline, or his sons, later resisted an invasion by the Romans, and then made an honourable peace with them. French romances and plays were founded on the story of Cymbeline, and Shakespeare took 'the slight suggestions of the old story for the shaping of his beautiful play', in which the fighting between Romans and Britons is only the background to the picture of a faithful wife, Imogen, tried and true.

Another battle was fought at Chearsley between the Saxons and Britons. Bucks was included in the Saxon kingdom of Mercia. In the seventh century Birinus, a Roman monk, was sent here by Pope Honorius to preach the Gospel; he met with much success in the Midlands, baptized the King of Wessex in 635, and founded the see of Dorchester, to which Bucks belonged up to the time of the Norman Conquest.

The name of Birinus or Berrin still lingers in the hills above Wallingford. He is said to have met with his death in the Chiltern woods by the bite of an adder—and legend adds that no adder can live within sound of Dorchester bells, though they were unable to save their saint and founder. Modwenna, an Irish princess, was also preaching to the heathen in Ireland, England, and Scotland. A woman of the most fearless and holy character, learned in all the age could teach, she was said to have been a disciple of St. Patrick. She was accompanied on her missionary journeys by a band of Christian maidens, who suffered gladly all sorts of hardships; reduced sometimes to eating the bark of trees; often flying from violence, but everywhere making converts. Modwenna founded two famous monasteries, as refuges for Christian women and as centres of worship, education, and missionary effort. One of these religious houses Modwenna ruled herself, the other was presided over by her friend, Edith, sister of an early King Alfred of Northumbria. One Lady Edith was the possessor of the town and manor of Aylesbury. A daughter, Osyth,

was born at Quarrendon to Frithwald, King of Mercia, who had become a Christian, and the young princess was sent to these two good women to be educated. The legends connected with her name are somewhat slight and trivial, but we repeat them as they were told to the children long ago. Osyth was sent by Modwenna to Edith with a book, then a rare and precious treasure. As she crossed a bridge on her way, she was blown into the water and sank. Modwenna and Edith searched for her in much distress ; coming on the third day to the place where she was, they called her by name and she rose out of the water alive and well. Her parents married her to a Prince of the East Saxons, but with his consent she built a nunnery on some land which he gave her at Chich in Essex, and devoted herself to a religious life. A band of Danish pirates tried to make her renounce her faith ; on her refusal she was beheaded at a fountain to which she was wont to resort for bathing. Then she rose, took up her head, walked with it in her hands to the church at Chich, and knocked at the door. Her friends took her body and buried it at Aylesbury, near which her home had been ; but she appeared in a vision to a smith of that town, and asked that her bones might be moved to Chich, which was done after they had rested forty-six years at Aylesbury. St. Osyth was canonized, and her day was kept at Aylesbury on October 7. A holy well, dedicated to her, was shown at Quarrendon. A pretty, homely custom kept up her memory. When the housewife went to bed (much alive to the danger of fire in the old thatched cottages), she raked out her hearth, made a cross in the ashes, and prayed to God and St. Osyth to keep the house till morning safe from fire and water.

The champion of heathenism in the seventh century was the famous Penda, King of Mercia, the last of the great Pagan princes. ' His ability and the unmitigated ferocity of the old Saxon spirit gave him an advantage over his more gentle and civilized neighbours.'[1] His daughters became Christian, and it was by the influence of women that Mercia at length abandoned the old paganism ; one daughter was said to be the mother of Osyth, another of Rumbold, or Rumwold, the baby-saint of Buckingham. Never, surely,

was a saintly reputation founded on so short a sojourn in this wicked world as that of Saint Rumbold. According to the legend he was born on November 1, 623, at King's Sutton, was baptized, and died. During his life of three days he spoke many holy words, professed his faith in Christ, and gave orders about the disposal of his body. This was to rest one year at Sutton, two at Brackley, and then to remain at Buckingham for ever. The church at Buckingham was at that time a chapelry of King's Sutton church in Northamptonshire.

The story of the infant confessor touched the imagination of the people. Many churches and wells were dedicated to St. Rumbold, and to these the blind and lame came in great numbers to be healed. The chief well in Buckingham seems to have been at the Prebend End of the town, and Church Street was formerly St. Rumbold Street ; he is still allowed to give his name to a lane. The south transept of the old church (destroyed by the fall of the spire in 1698) was called St. Rumbold's aisle, and so many pilgrims flocked to his shrine, that a large house was built for them to lodge in, to the west of the church, known as Pilgrims' Inn, and still standing towards the close of the eighteenth century. In 1477 Robert Fowler left a bequest for a handsome new shrine to be made in marble, and a coffin or chest curiously wrought and gilt to contain the saint's little bones. When the church was pulled down in 1777 and a new church erected on the site of the Saxon castle, the coffin of St. Rumbold was discovered.

After St. Rumbold's death Christianity spread fast. The Saxon kings of Mercia had a palace at Winslow ; Offa II founded the Abbey of St. Albans, and endowed it with his royal manor of Winslow. Many of the Danes under Alfred's influence became Christians, and were allowed to colonize a portion of the east of England, and to rule it by their own laws. Bucks was included in the Danelagh. But this peaceful absorption of the Danes did not come without a long struggle.

Alfred's son, Edward the Elder, had to defend himself from a Viking fleet from Brittany in 915 ; when they were beaten off he attacked the Danish settlements on the Ouse, took Buckingham after a siege of four weeks, and fought

and defeated the Danes at Bledlow ('the bloody Hill'), when the great Whiteleaf Cross is supposed to have been cut on the side of the chalk hill above Princes Risborough, as well as the smaller cross above Bledlow, to celebrate the victory; though there are prosaic people who say that the crosses were only way-marks for guiding travellers. King Edward lodged a considerable time at Buckingham and built a fortress in 918, on the hill where the church now stands (still remembered in the name of Castle Street); he and his sister Elfleda or Ethelfleda, the Lady of the March-land, 'a woman godly, righteous, and wise', were untiring in securing the safety and peace of the realm, in making good laws and building churches.[2] Holinshed tells us that the king suffered his sister Elfleda to govern the kingdom of Mercia during his life, 'and not without good reason, for by her wise and politic order, used in all her doings, he was greatly furthered and assisted. She did build and repair towns and castles and build bridges. . . . Finally, this martial Lady and manly Elfleda, the supporter of her countrymen, and terror of the enemies, departed this life at Tamworth about 919.' It has been said from the evidence in Domesday Book that the legal position of women was better under Saxon laws than it was at any later time till the close of Victoria's reign. Not only did women fill many high public offices,[3] but the wife's name appears side by side with her husband's as the 'lord' of a separate estate both among landlords and 'thanes', as in the instance of a female landowner at Tyringham during her husband's lifetime. Several Parliaments of the Mercian kings were held at Risborough. King Edward's second son, Edmund, the Deed-doer, recovered the Danelagh from the Danes, and made it part of the kingdom of England for ever; his name, like his father's, must have been well known in Bucks.

The next king who has left his mark on the county is Edward the Confessor, crowned on Easter Day, 1042. 'He was a quiet, pious man, loving the Normans with whom he had been brought up, and their polished clerkly ways, much interested in Church matters, which he and his Norman chaplains settled in their own way, beloved by his people who for a short interval were at peace and happy.'[1] Edward

was much occupied with building a church, where now the choir of Westminster Abbey stands, but he had the old English love of field-sports, and he also built himself a hunting-lodge at Brill, overlooking the royal forest of Bernwood; the office of Forester was held from that time forward by the Lords of Boarstall, about which there is a picturesque story. Nigel the Forester slew a great wild boar that had dared to interfere with the king's hunting, and he presented the boar's head on his knees to the king. Edward the Confessor granted to him and his heirs the custody of Bernwood, by the service of a horn entitled the Charter of the Forest. This Nigel built a house at Boarstall; the horn was handed down as an heirloom from one owner to another, and now belongs to Sir Lancelot Aubrey Fletcher, at Dorton House. In the old Boarstall House of Civil War fame the incident was represented on a carved wooden bedstead.

Another legend of Edward the Confessor is connected with Ludgershall. A Saxon yeoman, Wulmar, had a son Wulwin, surnamed Spillecorn. During a hard day's work felling timber in Bernwood Forest, Wulwin lay down under a tree and fell asleep; the sun shone full on his face, and he became blind for seventeen years. He visited eighty-seven churches and prayed to the saints in vain; he dreamt that the king could heal him, and having journeyed from Ludgershall to Windsor, and made his way with difficulty into the presence of the king, he told of his dream, and prayed for mercy. Edward, distrustful of his power, said he would be truly grateful if God chose by his means to take pity on a miserable creature. Then dipping his hands in water he placed them on his eyes, and the man cried out, 'I see you, O King!' The story goes that Wulwin was then appointed to a place of honour in charge of the palace of Windsor, and that he survived his benefactor by many years.

Edward's queen, Edith, owned the manors of High Wycombe, Amersham, and Little Marlow; she was a great lady in the realm as the daughter of the powerful Earl Godwin, but they were childless, and the king's last years were troubled by questions of the succession. 'At midwinter, 1065, King Edward came to Westminster to hallow

the Minster he had built to the glory of God and St. Peter,[1] and on Twelfth Night

> 'There suddenly came
> Death the bitter; and that dear Prince
> Took from the earth. The angels bore
> His soothfast soul into heaven's light.'

'Edward's holy life that spoke him full of grace, and the gift of prophecy ascribed to him, gained him the title of Confessor, and made him for years the favourite saint of the south of England.'

After his death and the few troubled months of Harold's reign, Norman influences were to dominate Church and State, but one more saint and the last of the Saxon prelates is connected with Bucks by legends.

St. Wulfstan was Bishop of Worcester from the reign of Edward the Confessor to that of William Rufus. 'As he was journeying to the Court of London he lodged at a town called "Wicumbe", and slept in an old house whose ruinous appearance threatened a speedy fall. And in the morning, when he was about to recommence his journey, the building began to crack, and the rafters and beams to give way downwards. All the servants jumped out of doors in a fright, so panic-struck as to forget altogether that their master was alone within; but once safely out of doors they remembered him, and shouted loudly for him to come out before the whole building fell down together; but none was brave enough to go in and rescue him. But he, fortified with the buckler of faith, stood calm and immovable, and by virtue of his sanctity the impending destruction was suspended until the horses and baggage were safely got out and loaded ready for departure. Then the holy man went forth from the building, and immediately the whole house was violently shaken and fell with a terrible crash, walls and roof, into a chaotic heap of ruins.' Six years later he was at Wycombe again to consecrate a church, and was credited with the miraculous cure of a maid-servant afflicted with a grievous disease of the tongue and throat. 'Wulfstan was a pattern of all monastic and episcopal virtues as then understood.'[4] Through all the changes and troubles of the Norman Conquest he was beloved by the conquerors and the

conquered. He devoted himself with the utmost humility and diligence to the welfare of the poor; he rebuilt Worcester Cathedral in the great age of Norman architecture, but his words were remembered that 'the men of old, if they had not stately buildings, were themselves a sacrifice to God, whereas we pile up stones and neglect souls'—he laid the emphasis of life on worship and service.

[1] York Powell and Tout, *History of England.*
[2] Holinshed's *Chronicle.*
[3] Victoria County History, *Bucks.*
[4] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

CHAPTER II

OF NORMAN KINGS, PRELATES, AND LEGENDS

After the Battle of Hastings, the lands of the English who had fought with Harold were given to Normans and Frenchmen, and manors in Bucks that had belonged to Edward the Confessor's queen were granted to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux; all over the county foreign nobles and churchmen held some of the best estates, but there was one fine exception to the general submission to the Conqueror.

A Saxon family named Shobbington had been settled at Hedgerley for generations, and when a Norman lord was prepared to seize the land with a warrant from William, and the grant of 1,000 of the king's own soldiers, Shobbington, the owner, was thoroughly roused. He got all his own people together, with his friends and neighbours the Hampdens and Penns, entrenched his house, and prepared for an obstinate resistance.

The Normans sat down before the place to besiege it, but according to the picturesque family story the Shobbingtons made a sally in the night, mounted on fierce but well-broken bulls, surprised the Normans, and broke up the camp. King William, a brave man himself, could appreciate courage and daring; he sent Shobbington a safe-conduct to come to Court, where he appeared riding on his bull, accompanied by his seven sons, and promised fealty if the king would confirm him in his estates, which William did, and he added

the name of Bulstrode to his own in memory of his trusty mount, and the name gradually replaced that of Shobbington. The Bulstrodes were well known in Bucks for many succeeding centuries. The story is a good one, but surnames were unknown until long after this.

As soon as he was settled in his new kingdom, William the Conqueror made the great inquest into the ownership of land and property, known as the Domesday Book, which was done so thoroughly that the people complained that there was not a yard of land, not one ox, nor one cow, nor one swine left out that was not set down in the king's rolls. From this survey we have accurate knowledge about the landowners and the produce of the county, more than eight hundred years ago.

'There has been a complete shifting of the population from North to South Bucks in eight centuries; Creslow had a larger population in 1085 than in 1901, while the population was lowest in the hundreds of Burnham, Desborough, and Stoke.'

By mapping out the townships and manors mentioned in Domesday as being laid waste, the march of William's forces after the Battle of Hastings has been traced. In Bucks the main army seems to have marched 'along the foot of the Chilterns through Risborough to Aston Clinton; then through Waddesdon and Claydon to Buckingham, and by Wolverton to Olney and Lavendon.' Whether Aylesbury or Buckingham were touched does not appear, but Stowe was 'waste' when the Bishop of Bayeux received it from the king. A right wing from Aston Clinton passed through Cublington and Linslade to the Brickhills; another detachment went by Iver, Taplow, and Woburn. In Saxon times the manor of Aston Clinton was held by a lady named Wlwen; a Norman knight, Edward of Salisbury, took possession of her lands, and was standard-bearer to Henry I at the Battle of Brenonville in 1119, in which Walter Giffard, Earl of Buckingham, also distinguished himself. He became Earl of Longville, and founded a Priory at Newton-Longville. William de Keynes, Lord of Milton Keynes, fought against King Stephen at the battle of Lincoln, and took him prisoner with his own hand.

The Norman kings continued to live at Brill as Edward the Confessor had done. Henry I was there and Henry II kept his Court in the palace in 1160, when Thomas à Beckett attended him as Chancellor, and again in 1162, the year when Beckett was made Archbishop of Canterbury.

Henry and Beckett were great friends in those days, and they may well have loved Brill, with its extensive views over the green expanse of the forest of Bernwood at their feet, abounding with deer and all kinds of wild creatures. Beckett in youth had been ' a bold rider and keen sportsman, he was always a hater of liars and slanderers, and a kind friend to dumb beasts and to all poor and helpless folk '.[1] As for Henry, he is described as a lover ' of temperate fare and ceaseless exercise, for he rose at daybreak, passed most of his time on horseback, and when he came home in the evening would tire out his courtiers by standing, for he would never sit down save at council and at dinner. His ungloved hands were rough and scarred with work, his legs bowed with riding, and his voice harsh from shouting to his soldiers and his hounds.' It is one of the great tragedies of history that the conflicting interests of Church and Throne and the king's hasty words too hastily interpreted, made Henry his friend's murderer, to his lifelong sorrow. We like to think of them at Brill in the early days riding about together and taking earnest counsel for the good of the realm. Henry was a great statesman and lawyer, ' he linked the old English free local moots, to the strong central Royal Court, by his plan of juries and judges in eyre, which have endured to this day, and made firm the foundations of the free constitution under which Englishmen and Americans are now living.'

With the Norman settlement came the Conqueror's foundation-charter of the new cathedral of Lincoln, which was endowed with the old churches of Aylesbury and Buckingham and the manor of Wooburn, part of King Harold's property forfeited after the Battle of Hastings. Bucks formed part of the new diocese of Lincoln ; church building and re-building received a great impetus, and many fine Norman churches then built remain to this day.

Sixteen years after the murder of Beckett, another great churchman, but of much gentler manners, the famous

Hugh of Lincoln, became our bishop from 1186 to 1200. St. Hugh laboured throughout his diocese, to put down oppression and to promote peace and righteousness. He was the friend of three English kings, Henry II, Richard, and John, to whom he gave frank and fearless counsel. While he sternly rebuked vice, specially in high places, he was full of compassion for the criminal and the madman, and most tender towards lepers. These unfortunate creatures were seen in Bucks, as the leper squints in many of our churches testify. St. Hugh found them banished from all human care, wicked in many cases, as well as miserable. He taught them, washed their sores with his own hands, and would eat out of the same dish with them; it was perhaps in consequence of his example that in Henry III's reign a Leper Hospital was established at Chipping Wycombe dedicated to St. Margaret and St. Giles.

The bishops of Lincoln had several palaces in the county, at Fingest, Wooburn, and other places. At Wooburn their fine old moated Manor House retained till the middle of the eighteenth century 'its ancient character of feudal magnificence'. As late as 1592 the church bell-ringers at Marlow were paid for ringing on St. Hugh's Day.

Two recorded incidents illustrate the manners of the time. From Buckingham it was reported to the bishop that a certain dead man *would* walk;[2] that he fell violently upon his wife and his brothers, that he walked even by day 'terrible to all, but visible only to a few'. A meeting of the clergy was called, when it was decided to wreak all sorts of violence on the dead body. This the bishop forbade, and wrote a letter in his own hand absolving the unquiet spirit. 'It was laid upon the dead man's breast and thenceforward he rested in peace, as did his alarmed neighbours; whatever we think of the tale we see the tender, reverent spirit of the bishop.'

At Wycombe and Berkhamstead he found some pagan rites still surviving in the worship of wells and springs; these customs he suppressed with a stern hand. He was looked upon as the enemy of all superstition, in his passionate desire for truth. 'St. Hugh stood singularly apart from the men of his time in his appreciation of alleged miracles. He desired neither to hear about miracles

wrought by others, nor would he allow them to be imputed to himself. A fine saying of his was remembered, "that the great miracle of the saints was their sanctity, and that this by itself was enough for guidance." ' 'His character was a rare combination of keen worldly wisdom and tact, with the deepest ascetic devotion. His most striking characteristic was perhaps his perfect moral courage.' He stood up for the people against the forest laws and the oppression of the royal foresters and gamekeepers. He thoroughly gauged King John's worthless character, and fought for the principles which triumphed soon after his death in the signing of Magna Carta.

The portrait is not complete without mention of St. Hugh's love of children and animals, which both warmly reciprocated. All children, even babies, were drawn to him, and he loved to romp with them ; he put many of his baby-friends to school later on, and started them in various callings.

The blue-tits came out of the trees to perch on his shoulder. Soon after the bishop was installed, a large wild swan came to the ponds at his manor of Stowe, outside Lincoln, and drove off and killed the other swans he found there. 'The servants caught and brought him to the bishop's room.[2] The beast-loving man, instead of sending him to the spit, offered him some bread, which he ate, and struck up an enthusiastic friendship with his master. It would nestle its long neck far up into the bishop's wide sleeve, and ask him for things with pretty little chatterings. It would leave the water and stalk through the house walking wide in the legs ; it would not notice or brook any other man. If the bishop slept or watched, the swan would keep other animals at bay. When he went away the bird retired to the middle of the pool, and took his rations from the steward, but would have none of him when his friend returned. No length of parting, even for two years, made any difference. When the carts and forerunners arrived (with the household stuffs) the swan would push boldly in among the crowd, and cry aloud with delight when it caught the sound of its master's voice ; it would go with him through the cloisters to his room, upstairs and all, and could not be got out without force. It lived for many a day after

its master had gone home. Floating conspicuous on the lake, it reminded orphaned hearts of their innocent, kind and pure friend, who had lived patiently and fearlessly, and taken death with a song—the new song of the Redeemed.' [2] The faithful swan became St. Hugh's attribute, and may be connected with the adoption of the swan as the arms of Buckingham and Wycombe, and as the County Badge, though it was afterwards associated with the great families of Mandeville and Bohun, who bore a swan on their shields.

King John and William, King of Scotland, the archbishops, abbots, and barons, all flocked to the bishop's funeral, 'no man so great that he thought himself happy to help carry that bier up the steep hill at Lincoln. Shoulders were relieved by countless hands, these by other hands; the greatest men struggled for this honour. The cathedral was blocked with crowds, men came in streams to kiss his hands and feet, and to offer gold and silver.'

In the words of an old poet—

> 'Staff to the Bishops, to the monks a treasure true,
> Counsel for schools—kings' hammer—such behold was Hugh!'

King John stirred to some real regret at the funeral of St. Hugh, who had helped to crown him, is perhaps the pleasantest glimpse we get of this wayward and cruel man's character. He kept up the palace at Brill and a hunting lodge at Datchet, but he was much out of England, fighting, and losing his father's splendid heritage of Anjou; hiring foreign mercenaries against his English barons, and alternately defying and abasing himself before the Pope of Rome. The key-note of Shakespeare's play is that King John acts at the bidding of expediency, not of right—'men false to their country make ill compacts with the enemy,' men false to themselves can never be true to their friends. In the tortuous story of the struggles between John, the French, and the Pope, our county had no share, but it is one of her chief historical glories, that it was in Bucks that the treacherous king was at last brought to bay. On June 15, 1215, on an island in the parish of Wraysbury, opposite Runnimede, the king, the archbishop, and the

barons met and signed the Great Charter of the Liberties of England. The massive oak table on which King John is said to have signed was long preserved at Datchet, and is now kept at Magna Carta Island.

The story is given by Holinshed with many graphic touches; the barons being come into the king's presence required of him 'first to appoint the use of those ancient laws unto them, by the which the kings of England in times past ruled their subjects; secondly that he would abrogate those newer laws, which every man might with good cause name mere wrongs, rather than laws . . . The barons, having obtained a great piece of their purpose, returned to London with their Charter sealed. Great rejoicing was made . . . the people judging that God had touched the king's heart and mollified it, whereby happy days were come for the realm of England—but they were much deceived. The king having condescended to make such grant of liberties, far contrary to his mind, was right sorrowful in his heart . . . he whetted his teeth, he leant now on one staff, now on another, as he walked, and oft brake the same in pieces, when he had done, and with such disordered behaviour and furious gestures he uttered his grief, before the breaking up of the Council, that the noblemen might well perceive . . . what would follow of his impatiency and displeasant taking of the matter.'[3] The king took immediate steps to break his plighted word; the Pope supported him; the barons in despair offered the crown to the eldest son of the King of France, and it was only John's miserable death in the succeeding year, that put a stop to a cruel civil war.

In the eastern counties John had plundered many abbeys and religious houses; in crossing the Wash he lost most of the booty and narrowly escaped drowning. After the wetting 'he fell into an ague the force and heat whereof, together with his immoderately feeding of raw peaches and drinking of new cider, so increased his sickness, that he was not able to ride, but was fain to be carried in a litter, presently made of twigs, with a couch of straw under him, without any bed or pillow, thinking to have gone to Lincoln. But the disease still so raged and grew upon him . . . that in the Castle of Newark, through anguish of mind rather

than through force of sickness, he departed this life, the eve of the 19th of October, 1216, in the year of his age fifty and one '.

(It is to the credit of the monks as gardeners that King John should have been tempted to excess by ' raw peaches ' about the middle of October ; they must have been cleverly stored, and were evidently a great delicacy.)

John bequeathed his body to St. Wulfstan as he died, and it was duly buried in Worcester Cathedral. Well did Shakespeare draw the moral of the reign in the fine lines which conclude his play :

' This England never did, nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror
But when it first did help to wound itself . . .
Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them. Naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true.'

The long rule of Henry III saw the coming of the Friars who cared for the sick and the lepers, and taught the people many useful arts ; and the development of the Schools of Learning at Oxford, after the model of the famous University of Paris. Both these things had their influence on the condition of Bucks.

The county had at least two learned men of her own in the thirteenth century, for whom a European reputation may be claimed, and both came from Wendover. ' Richard the Englishman,' as he was called abroad, was a distinguished doctor, who studied medicine at Paris and practised in Italy,[4] where he became so famous that he was appointed physician to Pope Gregory IX, who gave him on his death-bed a crucifix containing relics. His writings on anatomy and medicine were standard authorities in the profession ; some of his MSS. are at Oxford in the Bodleian and in the libraries of Balliol and Merton Colleges. Richard of Wendover seems to have ministered to the soul as well as to the body ; he was a canon of St. Paul's, and held other church preferment. When he died, in 1252, he bequeathed the Pope's crucifix to the Abbey of St. Albans.

The other famous scholar, who styled himself Roger Wendover of Wendover, that we might have no doubt as to

his native place, interests us still more in the schools than the physician does. It is thanks to his industry in collecting and writing his *Flowers of History* that many of these old stories have come down to us.

While kings and barons were busy fighting battles and making laws, and 'Gurth the swineherd' and his fellows were earning a bare pittance by incessant labour, it was one of the great merits of the monasteries that they gave shelter to a class in the community with sufficient learning, taste, and leisure both to preserve the history of old times and to chronicle the events of the passing day. The Scriptorium, or Record Office of the monastery, was one of the regular departments of a highly organized society, practising all the arts of peace. Those brothers who were good scribes and artists were set to make copies of the Bible and of all sorts of famous books, religious and secular, with exquisite penmanship and brilliant illuminations. In addition to this, they kept the accounts of the monastery, and a record of events inside the walls, and of the life outside as it affected their interests. Scholars and historians were thus formed, and Roger of Wendover, a priest with a monastic training, achieved a considerable reputation as an industrious editor and compiler, and as an original chronicler. Roger was less happy in making history himself than in recording the deeds of other men. As Prior of Belvoir he gave universal dissatisfaction;[4] accused of wasting the goods of the church, he was first reproved and then removed by his superior, the abbot. But once installed as the head of the Scriptorium of the great Abbey of St. Albans, soon after the signing of Magna Carta, he found his vocation, and did admirable and enduring historical work, till his death, in 1236. The garden of history from which he culled his *Flowers* has grown so prodigiously in extent and variety as to bewilder a modern gatherer of a modest posy; but Roger of Wendover's name stands as an example of love and reverence for the past and as an encouragement of any honest endeavour to preserve and hand on its treasures.

A curious little bit of thirteenth-century history may find a place here. Soon after St. Hugh's death, the Archdeacon of Buckingham, Matthe de Stratton, made a journey to Rome and died there; after which the popes

appointed to be Archdeacons of Buckingham four Italians in succession, who hardly ever visited England and performed their duties by deputy. One of these deputies was John Shorne, probably the man whose name was the most venerated throughout England, though he was never canonized.

In 1290 Master John Shorne, who had been Rector of Monk's Risborough, was appointed to the living of North Marston, which he held for some twenty-four years till his death in 1314.[5] He was renowned far and near for his great piety and miraculous powers; 'his knees became horny from the frequency of his prayers.' He blessed the water of the 'Holy Well' still shown at North Marston, and endowed it (as was believed) with healing properties. In those days and long after the Devil was a vivid personality, to be actually encountered and fought by the saints, and as St. Dunstan was said to have seized the Evil One with tongs, so Master Shorne caught the Devil and imprisoned him in his boot. For this reputed miracle he became an acknowledged saint. We are not told how the world was benefited while the Devil was kept in the boot; and whether North Marston in particular was freed from lying, malice, and all uncharitableness; but the story became widely known and was carved in wood and stone and painted in church windows. At North Marston, in 1660, and perhaps later, 'there was a picture in glass of Sir John Shorne, with a boot under his arm, like a bagpipe, into which he was squeezing a little figure of the Devil'. Two churches in Norfolk, Gately and Cawston, have representations of the Bucks saint; his fame spread from Kent to Northumberland, and in a poem of Heywood's, of the time of Henry VIII, a palmer, in telling of the holy places he had visited, classes Master John Shorne's shrine at Canterbury with St. Denis's at Paris and St. Mark's at Venice. But Shorne's chief shrine was at North Marston, where he died and was buried, and this became a famous place of pilgrimage; and such rich offerings did the pilgrims leave behind them that in the degenerate days of the monasteries the monks of Windsor bargained with the monks of Dunstable about the removal of the saint's bones. In 1478 the Dean of Windsor actually obtained the Pope's license to remove the shrine and the

relics to St. George's Chapel, Windsor; 'the monks published and bruited abroad what a sovereign qualified saint was come among them against all diseases spiritual and temporal.'

North Marston, however, continued to attract pilgrims, a stone image of the saint was there, and the Holy Well, famed for the cure of ague, then the most common form of illness in the county. An old rhyme says:

'To Master John Shorne
That blessed man borne
For the ague to him we apply—'

Such numbers of invalids came to the waters that houses were specially built to receive them, and a finger-post on Oving Hill directed travellers to the famous well, which was said to have this inscription on the wall:

'Sir John Shorne, Gentleman born,
Conjured the Devil into a Boot.'

When the Lollards were being persecuted at Amersham some were condemned to perpetual prison, some thrust into monasteries, and others forced to make pilgrimage to the principal shrines in the county, St. Rumbold's, Sir John Shorne's, and the Rood at Wendover. The Vicar of Wycombe got into trouble 'as he met certain coming from Sir John Shorne's, for saying they were fools and calling it foolatry'. A century later all England came to be of the vicar's opinion. At the time of the suppression of the monasteries one of the Commissioners wrote to Thomas Cromwell that at Marston 'Mr. John Shorne standeth blessing a boot, into which they do say that he conveyed the Devil'. This figure, which seems to have been of wood, was, with other of the more valuable relics, packed in a chest fast locked and nailed and sent up by barge to London. In the next reign Bishop Latimer, preaching 'of the Popish Pilgrimages', denounced the 'running hither and thither to Mr. John Shorne, or to Our Lady of Walsingham', and 'the Boot' was amongst the relics most ridiculed by the Reformers.

In 1876 a successor of John Shorne, as Vicar of North Marston, Dr. S. R. James, established a flourishing school there which he named Schorne College.

The history of the North Marston shrine is that of many others. Visits are paid at first to the place where a good man lived and died by those who knew and loved him; the custom spreads and a pilgrimage is authorized by the church, commended to the faithful, and imposed as a penance on heretics. Money (which has spoilt so many works of love) flows in and makes the shrine an object of greed and jealousy to rival monasteries, till the interests of the village are referred to the Pope at Rome; the avarice of the Court and nobles suppresses and confiscates whatever remains of the shrine; bishops denounce it, and Puritans deride, then the place and the saint fall into complete oblivion, till the modern historical spirit revives curiosity, and the locality is once more interested in a kindly, tolerant way in the story of its own bygone sanctity and greatness.

[1] York Powell and Tout, *History of England.*
[2] Rev. C. Marson, *Hugh of Lincoln.*
[3] Holinshed's *Chronicle.*
[4] *Dict. Nat. Biog.* [5] *Records of Bucks.*

CHAPTER III

EDWARD I AND ELEANOR OF CASTILE, AND THE CRUSADES, 1270–1307

One of the greatest movements of the Middle Ages of romantic and enduring interest is that of the Crusades. A holy man in France, Peter the Hermit, preached that it was God's will that Christians should unite to clear Palestine of its Mohammedan conquerors, who were putting the Syrian Christians to cruel deaths, and desecrating the holy places dear to believers all over the world.

It seems to our practical age almost incredible, that at a time when travelling was so difficult and dangerous, men should leave their homes, drop their daily work, risk plague, imprisonment, and death in many forms, for so shadowy an object; but thousands of all ranks, sewing a little cross

of red cloth on their left arm, vowed to fight the Turks and free the Holy Land.

The wonderful story of the Crusades is another proof that man does not live by bread alone, and that if the right appeal is made to the heart and the imagination, men and nations will throw up their material interests in the enthusiasm for a great unselfish cause.

> 'To chase the pagans in those holy fields
> Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
> For our advantage on the bitter cross.'

Thus Shakespeare puts the desire into the mouth of Henry IV, a century and a half later, when the inspiring motive of the Crusades was dying down. But when Edward I was young, the deliverance of Jerusalem still seemed possible to soldiers of the Cross. Minstrels and wandering story-tellers recounted their wonderful exploits; Crusaders who perished abroad were held in reverent memory; their cross-legged effigies may still be seen in some old churches, as in Hughenden, Clifton-Keynes, and Ashendon, though their very names have often been forgotten.

We realize something of what a journey to Palestine meant in the thirteenth century by following the fortunes of Prince Edward, eldest son of King Henry III, with his Spanish wife, Eleanor of Castile.

Henry III had been engaged in a long war with his barons, led by Simon de Montfort, a name familiar in South Bucks, where the de Montfort tombs are still to be seen in Hughenden Church.

Edward, a much better soldier than his father, had been fully occupied in defending King Henry's life and crown, and while the fortune of war favoured first one side and then the other, the royal ladies and children took refuge in France.

When peace was restored, the king's sons, Edward and Edmund, fired by the wish to follow their great uncle, Richard Cœur de Lion, prepared to take up the Cross in 1270. Edmund had lately married Aveline, heiress of William de Fortibus, Earl of Albemarle; she was content to

stay behind, and died before his return; but Edward's wife determined to accompany her husband. To all remonstrances Eleanor replied, that nothing should part those whom God had joined, and that the way to heaven was as short from Syria as from England or her native Spain. With her mother-in-law, Queen Eleanor of Provence, she made a pilgrimage to the chief English shrines to pray for the health of the children (two boys and a girl) whom she was to leave behind. A great gathering of the Estates of the Realm was held in Westminster Hall, when the barons kissed the hand of little Prince John and swore fealty to him as his grandfather's heir, in case his father should be killed in the Holy Land.

They were a striking-looking couple; Edward, like King Saul, was a head and shoulders taller than the people, famed in arms and in all manly exercises, wise in council, and strong-willed, with a wife who was in every respect his true and capable companion and helpmeet. Eleanor started first, and put all her energies into the preparations made in her husband's French dominions for the campaign.

When Edward joined her at Bordeaux they sailed with a fleet to Tunis, where their ally, Louis, King of France, had turned aside from the main purpose of the Crusade to fight another army of Moors. They found the good king dead of the plague and his army much discouraged. Indeed, most of the leaders determined to go home again, but Prince Edward declared that if all left him, he and his groom Fowin would go on alone. So with his faithful wife and his own men in thirteen ships only he sailed for Palestine.

In those days wars had to cease in the winter, and they retired to Sicily. When the time came round again 'that kings go out to battle', he landed in Palestine, raised the siege of Acre at Easter, 1271, fought and won a battle at Nazareth, and after much inconclusive fighting, wintered in Cyprus. Again he went to the fray and, accompanied by his wife, returned to Acre. Here he was nearly killed in his tent by the Emir of Joppa, who treacherously pretended to be the bearer of a letter. The old tradition that Eleanor sucked the poison from the wound we are no longer allowed to believe, but rather that her brother-

in-law Edmund led her away weeping, while a surgeon cut out the poisoned sore. During the siege of Acre a daughter, Joanna, was born to them, and they lost the company of a faithful friend. The Archbishop of Liège, a former tutor of Edward's, was ministering to them in the camp; he heard that he had been chosen to be Pope in his absence, and had to leave immediately for Italy.

There was much sickness and suffering in the English camp, and a ten years' truce was at last concluded with the enemy. Edward and Eleanor returned to Sicily, where sad news met them of the loss of their two little boys, and later of the death of Henry III. The new king and queen did not hurry home. They visited their old friend, now Pope Gregory X, who gave them a great reception at Orvieto, and lingered in France, where a boy was born to them, called Alphonso after the queen's brother. As they passed through any famous town and heard of a sham fight or tournament going on, King Edward must needs stop and try his strength in the lists, in the spirit of a keen cricketer who would not willingly miss a great match, if he were in the neighbourhood.

After their return, the wars with the Welsh filled many troubled years; Edward of Carnarvon, Prince of Wales, was the first of their sons who survived his childhood, and he had a Welsh nurse. Five hundred years later, Gray, whom we claim as a Bucks poet, wrote the fine lament of the Welsh bard who had seen Wales finally subdued:

> 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
> Confusion on thy banners wait.'

King Edward and Queen Eleanor were present in Lincoln Cathedral in 1280 when the body of the great Bishop Hugh was lifted out of the tomb and placed in a new shrine, adorned with gold and jewels, in the Angel Choir, near where the modern memorial to the good queen herself now stands.

In 1290, Eleanor fell sick of a fever, and Edward sent her to Harby in Nottinghamshire; it was the last of her many journeys; he joined her on November 20, and remained with her till her death on the twenty-eighth. She was called the 'Friend of the English, the peacemaker,

Photograph by S. Smith, Lincoln

EDWARD I AND ELEANOR

the stay of the realm '. In life they had been inseparable. For thirteen days he followed her bier from Lincoln to Westminster; and at each day's close they halted at some town where the clergy came out to meet the sad procession, and with prayers and dirges to place the coffin before the high altar of the principal church. At each resting-place the king put up later a beautiful stone cross in memory of the dear queen. One of the towns thus honoured was Stony Stratford, on the old Roman road of Watling Street, along which they proceeded to London. The last halt was at Charing Cross, which keeps to this day, in the midst of the bustle of a great railway terminus, the memory of the brave wife and 'dear Queen' who made in faith the long journey 'as far as to the Sepulchre of Christ', and lived to return, and to lay her bones in English earth, in the midst of a sorrowing people.[1]

The king granted his manor of Denham in South Bucks to the Abbot of Westminster, to provide that masses for her soul and singing by the whole convent should commemorate the day of the queen's death, with solemn tolling of the abbey bells. He settled every detail of the memorial services with tender care. After they had been reverently performed, 'seven times twenty poor people were to be found and served with victuals, within the close of the Abbey, before and after which, each of the said poor people shall devoutly say the Lord's Prayer and Creed and the Magnificat for the soul of the said Eleanor, and for all the faithful departed.'

Edward kept the next Christmas in Bucks, and held a Parliament at Ashridge, then within the borders of the county, where his cousin, Edmund Earl of Cornwall, had just founded a monastery of the order of Bonhommes (Good Men) and endowed it with a relic of the supposed blood of Christ, later the subject of much controversy. 'A pleasanter place than Asheridge it hard were to finde,' sang an old poet, but any district which had to provide the court with food was sorely distressed and impoverished. The king's dainties were supplied by levies on the sheriffs of the adjacent counties and the bailiffs of the towns.

[1] The cross in the yard at Charing Cross is not, of course, an original Eleanor cross; it was erected in the nineteenth century.

While Yarmouth sent herring-pies, Sussex brawn, and Bristol conger-eels, the sheriffs of Bucks and Beds sent up, on one occasion, 428 hens for the royal table. William de Ailesbury held his manor on condition of finding 'litter of straw' for the king's chamber, 'geese in summer and eels in winter', as often as the king should come into the town.

Edward I, unlike many of his successors, believed in Parliaments, and would always call on his people to help him in a difficult crisis. He took trouble to make elections free, 'forbidding any man to trouble them by force, craft or threat.' He was anxious for the safety of the high-roads, for setting watchmen in towns and villages, for the proper arming and calling out of the militia, and he forbade markets to be held in churchyards. Bucks sent up one or two county members to Edward's Parliaments, but only four boroughs were then represented: Amersham, Marlow, Wendover, and Wycombe. The king took some trouble to settle the grievances of the burgesses of Wycombe against their powerful neighbour Alan Bassett, concerning 'outlying lands and mills, and the right to hold fairs and markets, and even the claim of the Lord of the manor to carry off the dung in the streets'. Such matters had come up in two previous reigns, with constant complaints of the wrongs done 'by the said Alan, to the said burgesses', and though Edward I confirmed their liberties 'for ever', yet the heirs of the said Alan and the said burgesses went on disputing for another 250 years or more, till Queen Mary granted them a 'final charter' in 1553.

The king had a palace at Chenies in Bucks. His father, Henry III, had been building walls round Windsor Castle, and this noble pile gradually displaced the palace at Brill in royal favour.

In 1292, the Friars were preaching another crusade, and Oliver Sutton, one of St. Hugh's successors as Bishop of Lincoln, sent his blessing through the Archdeacon of Buckingham to all who should assist the Friars in the county of Bucks, in getting recruits for the Holy War. The king was too busy with the Scottish war to help them then, but in his will he left a great sum of money to equip seven score knights for the Holy Land, where he wished his heart to be buried.

'Edward kept his full health and strength till within a few days of his death, though his life had been rough and restless.[1]' His device was 'Keep Troth', and he lived up to it.

It is a matter of the deepest regret that Stony Stratford has lost King Edward's gift, the Eleanor Cross; but he in life, and she in death, left their mark in the county.

[1] York Powell and Tout, *History of England.*

CHAPTER IV

JOHN WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLARDS

JOHN WYCLIFFE (born about 1324, died 1384), the religious and social reformer, was born near Richmond in Yorkshire. On the opposite bank of the Tees was Barnard Castle, the owner of which, John Balliol, had founded in the preceding century the famous Oxford College called after him. To Balliol College the boy was sent as a scholar, with far-reaching effects upon Oxford and upon England. Wycliffe became a Fellow, and afterwards Master of Balliol, he was a learned Doctor of Divinity, and the greatest English preacher of his day. At that time the University teachers were only paid by being given church preferment; Wycliffe held the living of Fillingham, which he exchanged for that of Ludgershall in 1368. Probably he did not reside here much, but Ludgershall was near enough to Oxford for Wycliffe to ride backwards and forwards between his parish and his college, and it was in the priest's chamber over the church porch that he is said to have written one of his famous books, *Concerning the Civil Power*. Buckinghamshire was permanently influenced by the teaching of Wycliffe and his followers, after he himself had left Ludgershall for Lutterworth in Leicestershire.

During the lifetime of Wycliffe a great change passed over England. In his boyhood were the brilliant victories of Edward III and the Black Prince, followed by the

exhaustion of the country which had lavishly poured out men and money for the long war with France ; and in the midst of a reign in many respects so glorious, fell 'the gigantic calamity of the Black Death', a sickness which in 1349 carried off from one-third to half the population of England.

The Great Pestilence fell heavily on all the Midland counties ; in Bucks the religious houses suffered much, the Prior of Bradwell, and the Prioress of Ankerwyke, and seventy-seven of the parochial clergy died in that fatal year, 1349.

When the plague was at last stayed, manufacturers were without workmen, farmers without labourers, and in spite of laws to keep down wages, the few men available would make their own terms, and the forced service of feudal times was superseded by free labour for wages, the herdsmen and ploughmen leading the way in the rural counties.

The great wealth of the church had constantly called forth the protests of reformers, but that wealth was most unequally divided. While the bishops and abbots enjoyed great revenues and were practically independent of the civil law, the parish priests were miserably poor. In many places the great monasteries had absorbed the tithes, and appointed as vicars illiterate men, who undertook the duties for next to nothing.

The prelates and clergy did not refuse subsidies to the crown, but they already paid heavy taxes to the Pope, and 'the influence of Pope, bishop, and monk on parish work was very bad'. It was a complaint of the rich men of the time that the poor parish priest often took part in the popular tumults and risings which culminated in the Peasants' War.

In 1374 Wycliffe and Gilbert, Bishop of Bangor, were sent to Bruges, as Royal Commissioners, to treat with the Pope's delegates about various points in dispute between England and Rome.

It was a time of trouble and unrest. The old King, Edward III, was in his dotage, the Black Prince, whose last breath had been spent in defence of the privileges of parliament, was dead. Langland, the poet of the people's

sufferings and wrongs, compared the Commons 'to an assembly of mice and rats who were consulting how to bell the cat, the old king, who was at perpetual war with them. But people were warned that worse times would come when the kitten, Richard II, was king, there would be no one to keep order, and anarchy would be let loose'.

Wycliffe, pondering over these things as an English parish priest and a statesman, 'was the first to see that no effectual reform was possible unless it was undertaken by the lay power, and that enormous advantages would accrue to the State if the accumulated wealth of the monastic idlers could be used to relieve the heavy burden of ever-growing taxation "which was crushing the working-classes".' He vigorously protested against the interference of Rome in English affairs. His name was known to all classes as the champion of the poor, and as the learned churchman who 'called upon the State to reform an unwilling clergy'.

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the strongest of the king's sons, took up Wycliffe for political reasons, rightly valuing a man 'supreme in the arts of persuasion and debate', and brought him from Oxford to preach at Paul's Cross and in the London churches. John of Gaunt was pledged to a crude scheme of church disendowment, which would have enriched the nobles without benefiting the nation at all. Courtenay, bishop of London, was much incensed and alarmed. At his instigation the gentle Archbishop Sudbury in February, 1377, summoned Wycliffe to appear before him at St. Paul's. There were many cross-currents of popular feeling. The citizens, who loved Wycliffe, had a quarrel with John of Gaunt, who was attacking the power of the Lord Mayor and the liberties of the city. As Wycliffe moved slowly up the crowded cathedral aisle of old St. Paul's, said to be the longest in Christendom, supported by the royal duke and Lord Percy, and with a body of Oxford friars, the mob of London streamed in, and the strange trial began.

It was chiefly a loud dispute between the peers and the Bishop of London, until the mob broke in and fought the duke's guard, and[1] 'the prisoner was carried off by his friends, whether in triumph or retreat it was hard to tell.

What Wycliffe thought of it all, we can never even guess. We do not know whether he wished the duke to go with him at all. In the roaring crowd of infuriated lords, bishops, and citizens, he stood silent, and stands silent still '.

In June the old king died. The next year Wycliffe was summoned to answer eighteen articles of accusation before the archbishops in Lambeth Chapel, when the Princess of Wales, mother of the young king, sent an imperious message, forbidding the court to proceed against him, and the citizens broke into the chapel and set him free. He was still supreme at Oxford, then ' a centre of learning and thought, which has no parallel in importance to-day ' ; he provided the university in his Latin addresses with ' new views of religion and society ', while from the pulpit he taught the people in English ' doctrines which he had first put into shape for the learned '. It was not until his studies led him to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation in 1381 that he was branded as a heretic. ' John of Gaunt hurried down to Oxford to prevent him from ruining a fine political career by an insane love of truth.' Wycliffe had quite other plans in his head than his patron dreamt of, he refused to keep silence, and the alliance of the two men came to an end.

Disappointed in all hope of political reform, and driven at length from his official position in the university, Wycliffe devoted himself to the deeper spiritual needs of England, and determined to fight ignorance and promote vital religion by translating the Scriptures and establishing an order of ' poor preachers ' to teach the common people. ' He gathered round him a body of university men,[1] living together at Oxford, probably in some common hall, clad in long russet gowns of one pattern, with large pockets, going on foot through the country ' preaching in churches or in the open air to rich and poor a simple form of evangelical religion, and exaggerating their master's antagonism to the existing church order.

Wycliffe's teaching put the Bible in quite a different position from that given to it by the mediaeval clergy. He began the great Protestant appeal to Scripture against church traditions and venerable abuses, and in consequence he thought it of the highest importance that the laity should

be able to read the text for themselves. Parts of the Bible had been rendered into Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, and the learned might study it in Latin; the Psalms were the treasure-house of the Church's devotions, but Wycliffe for the first time conceived and executed the great task of translating the whole Bible from Latin into the vulgar tongue. He himself undertook the Gospels, and probably completed the whole of the New Testament, while his friends and followers worked at the Old Testament; the English Bible was completed before 1400, but parts of it were in circulation by 1381. In that year a sudden revolt in Kent under a priest, John Ball, was attributed to the spread of Wycliffe's opinions, and the cruel suppression of the Peasants' War and the treachery of the young king increased the bitterness of the rulers in church and State against 'the evangelical Doctor'.

But the angel of death came mercifully to call Wycliffe before the terrible persecution of his followers began; he was taken ill while at service in his own church at Lutterworth, in December, 1384, and he never spoke again.

Wycliffe reverenced the sacraments, and loved the services of the church. He wrote of the Virgin as an example to all good women, but he held that the worship of Mary and of the saints, the regard for relics, the supremacy of the Pope, and, above all, the doctrine of Transubstantiation were late additions to the beliefs of the primitive church. He denounced the sale of pardons and indulgences, and the whole system of extorting money for sins, while doing little to reform the sinner, 'as if grace could be bought and sold like an ox or an ass.' He preached a large tolerance, many centuries in advance of his age, pleading that Christ wished his commandments to be obeyed willingly and freely, and had appointed no civil punishment for the breach of them. His austere and simple life, his undaunted courage and plain speaking, everywhere attracted the common people.

As the years went on the bitterness against Wycliffe's memory and his writings increased; but, strangely enough, while his books were being burnt in England they were leavening a court and nation in the middle of the continent

of Europe. Anne of Bohemia, the much-loved wife of Richard II, herself a patroness of learning, was a link between Prague and Oxford, and at least one young Bohemian noble, of her numerous suite, studying in our university, carried Wycliffe's works back with him to his own country. Queen Anne possessed the four Gospels in English—'not', as Bishop Arundel said in his sermon at her funeral in 1394, 'that this godly lady had these books for a show, hanging at her girdle, but that she seemed to be a studious occupier of the same'. It was so well known that John Huss derived his opinions from the English doctor, that the Council of Constance, which condemned Huss to death, thought it worth while actually to decree that Wycliffe's body, which had lain peacefully in the grave for over thirty years, should be dug up and publicly dishonoured.

Wycliffe's preachers were mostly ordained priests of the church with Oxford degrees; neither they nor their hearers were prepared to be considered as heretics, still less as martyrs. When called to account they were ready to argue, to explain, and if need were to recant; they had the support of many powerful laymen, and when released they went out again teaching, and distributing the Scriptures. But when under Henry IV and Henry V they were hunted out of the church, and the godly were bidden 'to shun and avoid' a Wycliffite 'as a serpent which putteth forth most pestiferous poison',[1] their congregations consisted more and more of poor working folk, and the 'Hedge-Priests' themselves became less and less educated. The contemptuous name of Lollard (an idle, lolling fellow) was given them, but the very fact that they were treated as a dangerous sect, inspired them with the consciousness that they had something worth holding by, they apologized no more, but kept firmly to their convictions.

The Bishop of Lincoln, and Keeper of the King's Privy Seal, was John de Buckingham, born in that town, and for some time Rector of Olney, but he does not seem to have taken any prominent part in the controversy.

In 1397 Sir John Cheyne of Chesham Bois was condemned to death, with the Lollard chief, Sir John Oldcastle, but the sentence was commuted to perpetual imprisonment. Thomas Drayton, rector of Drayton Beauchamp, was

excepted by name in a general pardon granted to Lollards in 1414.

It was in this second generation that the Lollards gained a strong footing in Bucks from Oxford to the Chilterns. Foxe, who was collecting materials for his popular *Book of Martyrs*, in the first years of Elizabeth's reign, found at Amersham an old man and woman who had actually seen, as children, the burning of Lollards.

Stories were whispered by cottage fires of the brave end of William Tylsworth, martyred in Stanley Close, his own daughter Joan being forced to carry and to light the faggots; of Thomas Harding, Thomas Bernard, and James Morden, Amersham working-men, and of Joan Norman, who also suffered; of Thomas Chase, and of Robert, the miller of Missenden, burnt at Buckingham, and of many another humble and honoured name. Christopher Shoemaker, of Great Missenden, was accused of converting a neighbour by reading to him the words of Christ, from a book called *Wickliffe's Wicket*; he was burnt to death in 1518.

When power changed hands, the same intolerant spirit caused many an innocent Catholic to suffer. These bitter memories are recalled, not for the sake of reviling the persecutors, but because it is part of our proud inheritance as a county, that from generation to generation Bucks men and women met death in its most cruel forms, with quiet courage, rather than deny the truth, which was the whole of truth to them as they understood it.

The interest of Wycliffe's life to English churchmen lies in the fact that it was an English priest who strove to reform the Church of England from within, and that the Reformation which came back to us more than a century later from Germany and Geneva was of English descent, and returned to a land long since prepared to receive it, by the work of John Wycliffe, once Rector of Ludgershall.

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *Life and Times of Wycliffe.*

CHAPTER V

THE RED ROSE AND THE WHITE ROSE IN BUCKS

HENRY IV's reign was full of political and social unrest, and Henry V began again the long strife with France. The war was very popular, as wars generally are, especially wars of aggression; and under the leadership of the young king, one of the splendid figures in our island story, our county cheerfully provided men and money. At Agincourt

> 'The men of Buckingham came on
> Under the Swan the badge of that old Town'.

We have a very definite link in the county with Henry's queen, Catherine of France, the little French bride, with her broken English, familiar to us in Shakespeare's play of *Henry V*. The village of Long Crendon was assigned to her,[1] and her Great Steward, Walter Beauchamp, held several courts there up to the thirteenth year of her son's troubled reign. The Court-Rolls of the manor date back to Edward III, the Court-House was the recognized place for holding the manorial courts, and was the centre of the village life. In 1482 to 1488 the Dean and Canons of Windsor held courts at Crendon again, under Henry VII, so that the Long Crendon Court-House, besides its value as a specimen of fourteenth-century domestic architecture, has many historical associations. On Henry's untimely death his conquests fell to pieces. The Red Rose of Lancaster was represented by a tiny rosebud, in Henry of Windsor, who became king at nine months old. The Privy Council were early busied about his education. The Lady Alice Boteler (whose family had lately founded the Grey Friars monastery at Aylesbury) was charged to teach him courtesy and good breeding, and the warrant running in the name of his two-year old majesty, allowed her 'to chastise us reasonably from time to time as the case may require'.

When the king was seven years old, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who had travelled much in Italy, became his tutor, and the Court was filled with little boys, heirs of

the peers of the realm, who were to be brought up with the king, perhaps in imitation of the Palace School, an educational experiment, at Mantua, called the Home of Joy.

To found a school or college was now the aim of the best men of the day, as their ancestors had endowed monasteries and priories. Archbishop Chicheley, said to have been Rector of Bletchley, who baptized Henry VI, founded a grammar school at Higham Ferrars and the College of All Souls, Oxford.[1] The Earl of Suffolk, one of the king's chief friends, had just given the Ewelme Endowment, the benefits of which have lasted to the present day; many Bucks children getting higher education, and many excellent cottages having been built at Marsh Gibbon and elsewhere from the Ewelme funds.

The young king, who loved learning, was therefore following the best examples about him, when at eighteen he wished to found 'The King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor'. He speaks of it '"as a sort of first fruits of our taking into our own hands the government of our kingdoms . . . it has become the fixed purpose of our heart to found a college . . . not far from our birthplace".[1] The school was only a part of the foundation; there were almshouses for poor and disabled men and a great church with clerks and choristers and provision for the teaching of music and part-singing. A Master in Grammar was to teach the twenty-five (afterwards seventy) poor scholars and all others whatsoever from any part of our realm of England, freely, without exaction of money.'[2] The model and mother of Eton was Winchester College, and the same rules applied generally to both. The beautiful chapel represents only the choir of the great church Henry had planned. The king laid the first stone of it himself in 1441, just before he went to lay the first stone of the sister college he was building, King's College, Cambridge, with its glorious chapel.

The Eton scholars, elected between the ages of 8 and 12, were taught reading, music, and grammar; the latter was defined as 'the key to the Scriptures, the gate to the liberal sciences, and to theology the mistress of them all'. Latin was understood all over Europe, and an Eton boy was expected to have a good knowledge of certain Latin authors, to write Latin prose and verse and to speak it in and out of

college.[1] A letter of 1479 has preserved the kind of subject set for Latin verse :

'Quare quomodo non valet hora valet mora ?

Why, when the hour does not avail, does delay avail ? and the boy answers that you can see an example in the trees, everything cannot be done in a day but delay avails.'

The discipline was severe. Religious instruction, according to one set of rules, was to be given before breakfast, the master reciting 'one little piece in Latin of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Treatise of Manners, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins . . . or some other proper saying meet for the Babies to learn'. The Treatise of Manners went into minute details and began with the lines (in Latin) :

'Good manners for the table here we tell
To make our scholars, gentlemen as well.'

It contained the famous epigram, 'Remember that you eat to live, and do not live to eat'; the perfect manners for which Etonians are famous have therefore long roots in the past.

The old English song-game of 'Nuts and May' keeps the memory of the simple diversions which preceded by many centuries the cricket and football of our public schools, and even the earlier hoops and marbles. On May Day Eton boys were allowed to get up at four, to gather boughs of May to adorn the college windows, provided always 'that they do not wet their feet'. They were then also permitted to write their verses in English 'on the flowery sweetness of springtime'. In September the school went a-nutting, and nuts were given to the master and fellows.

Thomas Alwyn (or Walwayn) of Newport Pagnell was head master from 1441 to 1442, but his name is obscured by that of William Waynflete, the great Winchester head master, transferred to Eton perhaps as provost, the founder of Magdalen College, who divided his energies between Winchester, Eton, and Oxford.

It is a curious little bit of history that Cromwell was the last to give the annual royal gifts of game and wine to Eton College.

'PLUCKING THE RED AND WHITE ROSES IN THE OLD TEMPLE GARDEN'

From the fresco in the Palace of Westminster by H. A. Payne

And so Henry's foundation flourished, but the pious founder himself was struggling in a sea of troubles. 'Plague and bad weather and famine wrought misery which was heightened by the weak rule, which suffered wrongs and crimes to go unpunished and unatoned.' The Wars of the Roses completed the people's misfortunes.

When Edward IV was proclaimed king he made a great effort, even in the founder's lifetime, to transfer the Eton endowments to Windsor, and to substitute the names of Edward and Elizabeth for those of Henry and Margaret. Bells, plate, and jewels were actually carried off to St. George's Chapel. The Provost Westbury bowed to the storm, but he and Waynflete, who had been specially charged by Henry to carry out his plans, gradually regained the favour of Edward and saved Eton College for the county, with a new charter.

Henry's college continued to flourish, and in 1529, another Bucks man, Richard Cox, born at Whaddon and educated at Eton, became head master. Ascham's account of 'the best schoolmaster and greatest beater of his time', long thought to be Udall, is now said to describe Cox,[1] who was undoubtedly a great head master; the self-government of boys by boys flourished under his rule. Cox became tutor to Edward VI, suffered persecution and exile under Mary, and was Bishop of Ely under Elizabeth. His successor, Nicholas Udall, is better remembered as 'the father of English comedy'. He wrote plays for the Eton boys, and their acting and recitations were so good that when later the Puritan spirit would have put them down, it was pleaded that there was no better training than this for a public speaker—Eton that had begun by training priests and preachers was turning out orators and statesmen besides.

The story of Eton forms a literature in itself, and is interwoven with all the later history of England and the Empire. Reverting to the time of Henry VI we find another grammar school was founded in Bucks in the parish of Thornton, within a few years of the founding of Eton.

The founder, John Barton, of Thornton Hall, was a successful lawyer and Recorder of London, who represented Bucks in the last Parliament of Richard II. Thornton Grammar School was a small Eton, 'in such proportion as

the riches of a Recorder might bear to the resources of a Monarch.'[1] All essentials were the same—the masses for the founder's soul, the grammar school free for all the children of the town, the scholars on the foundation, and the alms-folk. But whereas at Eton the services were conducted by a provost, ten fellows and ten chaplains, at Thornton the chaplain and head master were one and the same.

Being founded under Henry VI it was thought prudent, as at Eton, to have a fresh license from Edward IV in 1468, in which Barton's Chantry is said to be founded by Robert Ingleton, another Thornton man. 'Sir William Abbot, Chantry Priest,' in Tudor times, seems to have been schoolmaster up to the age of 86; he died in 1574. His successor, John King, was styled 'Schoolmaster of our Lady the Queen at Thornton'. Eton College and the tiny grammar school at Thornton, with its six scholars and six alms-folk, are the only grammar schools known to have existed in the county before the Reformation.

It is a delightful bit of bygone Bucks history that while king, prelate, and peer were setting up great lamps of learning, the lawyer and the small country squire were lighting their own little candle in the village of Thornton, hereafter to transfer its light to Buckingham. And if the 'spires and antique towers' of Eton still venerate 'Her Henry's holy shade', the scholars of the present flourishing Latin School at Buckingham may well make a pious pilgrimage to Thornton Church, to visit the tombs of the Bartons and Ingletons, their early benefactors under the Red Rose and the White.

The tide of Civil War ebbed and flowed, no actual fighting took place in Bucks, but the roar of battle echoed from St. Albans in 1455 on the eastern border, to Northampton on the north in 1460.

At the Battle of Wakefield, Sir John Tyringham of Tyringham was fighting for Henry VI, he was seized and beheaded with some other knights to avenge the death of Richard, Duke of York, though not personally responsible for it.

In the spring of 1461 Edward IV was proclaimed king, Henry fled to the north, and Margaret to Flanders. In 1464

Warwick, the kingmaker, who was anxious to strengthen the House of York, was negotiating a marriage between Edward and the sister of the crafty and powerful King Louis XI of France; but Edward, who ought to have been with his soldiers in Yorkshire, lingered at Stony Stratford, a place intimately connected with him and his son at turning points in their fortunes. While hunting in Whittlebury Forest he met Elizabeth (Woodville), the widow of Sir John Grey, who was killed fighting for the Red Rose in 1461. Her father, Sir Richard Woodville, had been made Lord Rivers by Henry VI, and she had herself been lady of the bed-chamber to Queen Margaret. Seeing, however, that the fortune of war was with the White Rose, the lady, with her two little sons, waylaid the young king Edward in the forest and made a personal appeal to him, as her dower and their inheritance were forfeited or withheld. Elizabeth, Lady Grey, is described as a woman 'of a more formal countenance, than of excellent beauty . . . yet with her sober demeanour, sweet looks, and comely smiling, beside her pleasant tongue and trim wit, she made subject to her the heart of that great prince'; [2] and in May 1464 they were married secretly at her mother's house at Grafton, Edward returning to Stony Stratford. A few days later he paid her a longer visit, and went on to York, as if nothing had happened. The secret was kept, till Warwick again pressed his French alliance, and Edward told his council that he was already a married man. The unpopularity of the alliance was increased by the honours showered upon the queen's relations, and the great marriages arranged for them. After Elizabeth's Coronation, William Paulet, of Wraysbury, was given the office of Tailor of the Great Wardrobe; so the Court fashions, at least, were set by Bucks. He had for his wages 12*d.* a day, out of the manor of Langley Marish, which, with Wraysbury, was part of the queen's dower. The Woodvilles were fond of display, so perhaps it was not William Paulet's blame that fashions were so extravagant. Never had such ample sleeves swept the ground, nor headdresses soared to such a height, nor peaked cloth shoes attained to such a length of inconvenience.

Swans, always plentiful in the county, were considered

as 'the king's game'. Edward IV ordained that no one whose income was less than five marks might possess a swan. Owners marked their swans on the beak, the king's swans had 'the double-nick', perverted into the double neck, which became the swan with two necks of the old sign-boards. The swan-upping, or taking up of the cygnets to mark them, was on the Monday following Midsummer Day.

In 1466 the unfortunate King Henry was captured, lodged in the Tower, but not unkindly treated; Edward and Warwick quarrelled, and Henry was again proclaimed king in 1470, but Edward regained the throne by his victory at Barnet in 1471. His friend Montague and his enemy Warwick were slain there, and he buried them both in state at Bisham Priory; Warwick had owned the manors of Newport Pagnell and Linford, forfeited by the Botelers. Edward reached London on May 21, and that night Henry died in the Tower, certainly by violence. 'His life had been so sorrowful, and he himself had been so innocent of the wrongdoing that had brought civil war on in England, that many men held him for a martyr. He was a merciful man, long-suffering, mild of speech, and patient in his troubles; pure and pious in his life, ever grieving over the sin and sorrow he could not stop.'[2] The next day Edward knighted and rewarded many citizens who had stood by him, and among them Ralph Verney, of the Mercers' Company, afterwards Lord Mayor. The king gave him the forfeited lands of William Wandsworth, in Aylesbury, Bierton, and Burcote, and Sir Ralph Verney purchased the estate of Middle Claydon, and built himself a house there. North Bucks seems to have supported the White Rose, but families were cruelly divided. Sir Ralph's son, Sir John Verney, later sheriff for the county, married Margaret, named after the Queen of the Red Rose, whose father, Sir Robert Whittingham, died for King Henry at Tewkesbury. As the fortunes of war changed, the menaced households put forward, as in Stuart times, the services of any member of the family who had fought on the other side, to ward off ruin and death. An old crusader, Sir John Cheynie, died in 1468, aged 100.

Richard Fowler, of Buckingham, the descendant of

another crusader, rose into favour, and King Edward made him his Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; he was member for Bucks and a benefactor of his native town till his death in 1477.

Thomas Lord Hungerford, of Stoke Poges, a brave supporter of the Red Rose, was put to death by Richard, Duke of Gloucester. His younger brother, Walter, narrowly escaped the same fate when Richard was king, but he managed to escape near Stony Stratford from the guards, who were taking him to the Tower, and fought bravely for Henry VII at Bosworth Field.

Edward IV's troubled reign continued to be embittered by the feud between the king's brothers and the Woodvilles, and when the king died in 1483 in the prime of life, Holinshed attributes to him a speech foreshadowing coming trouble—'The realm,' said the dying man, 'should always find kings and peradventure as good kings. But if you among yourselves in a child's reign fall at debate, many a good man shall perish, and haply he too and ye too, ere this land find peace again.' The queen took sanctuary in Westminster, with her second son Richard. The Prince of Wales was at Ludlow, under the care of his uncle, Earl Rivers; the story is vividly told by Shakespeare in *Richard III*. The queen begged that her son might have a strong escort when he came up to London to be crowned, but she was overruled. A few days later the Archbishop of York announced to her—

'At Stony-Stratford they do rest to-night.'

How the name must have brought back the happy and romantic days of her courtship and stolen marriage, when she was loved by a king for herself alone, in defiance of the maxims of prudence and high policy, and it was just at Stony Stratford that the great tragedy of her life began. Her young son was taken prisoner there by his uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and she never saw him again; her brother was put to death.

Edward V slept at Stony Stratford, where his window in an old house is still shown, and Earl Rivers, with part of his suite, went on to Northampton; the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham met them there. The next morning they

took the way to Stony Stratford, ' where they found the king and his company ready to leap on horseback. They alighted down with all their company about them, in which goodly array they came to the king, and on their knees very humbly saluted His Grace, who received them in a very joyous and amiable manner, nothing knowing nor mistrusting as yet what was done.'

That sadly interrupted journey ended in the Tower, where the king's brother joined him—

' Rough cradle for such pretty little ones.'

The sad pity of their murder still stirs us, as it has stirred many hearts for 400 years ; an old song helped to keep their memory green—

' When these sweet children thus were laid in bed
And to the Lord their hearty prayers had said,
Sweet slumb'ring sleep, then closing up their eyes,
Each folded in the other's arms then lies.'

Did the children of Stony Stratford sing it, one wonders, where they had once gathered, to see their boy-king ride past.

[1] Victoria County History, *Bucks.* [2] Holinshed's *Chronicle.*

CHAPTER VI

CATHERINE OF ARRAGON, 1485-1536

When Henry VII arranged the marriage of his son Arthur, Prince of Wales, with Catherine of Arragon in 1501, he chose the future Queen of England from the most celebrated reigning family in Europe.

Spain, which in the reign of Henry VII's granddaughter Elizabeth, was the bitter enemy of England and the tyrannical suppressor of political and religious liberty, then stood as the champion of Christianity against Mohammedanism ; and the fight of centuries was brought to a climax by the expulsion of the Moors from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, the parents of

Princess Catherine. Isabella was the most prominent and popular woman of her time. A queen in her own right, an accomplished scholar, an admirable wife and mother, her arrival in the field had often changed defeat into victory by the enthusiasm she inspired in the soldiers. She was idolized by her people and held as a Saint by the Church ; it was her help and sympathy that sent Columbus forth to the discovery of the New World, and thus gave to Spain the dominion of South America and the West Indies.

Catherine's childhood was spent in most stirring scenes. Queen Isabella lodged in the Spanish camp with her four little girls during the long siege of Granada, and devoted all her leisure to their education. Catherine was a good Latin scholar, a student of the Bible in Latin, and was accomplished in needlework and all feminine arts.

She was in Granada when the English king asked her in marriage for his son. Her father and her future father-in-law, both famous for their skill in driving a hard bargain, wrangled long over the disposal of her large dowry, but when this was settled Catherine was well received in England, and Henry VII gave her as Princess of Wales the rents of land in Steeple Claydon, Wendover, Wraysbury, Bierton, and other Bucks villages, so that she was at once connected with the county.

Arthur, Prince of Wales, died at Ludlow a few months later, and Catherine was left a widow at seventeen. She longed to return to her own country, but Henry VII, wishing to keep her fortune in England, obtained special leave from the Pope that she should marry his second son Henry, now his heir. This marriage took place just after Henry VII died in 1509.

The young king and queen made a magnificent progress through London.[1] The houses were hung with tapestry and cloth of gold, and maidens in white lined the streets holding palms of white wax in their hands, marshalled by priests in rich robes with fragrant incense in their silver censors. The bride herself was in white embroidered satin, her fine black hair hung down her back from under her golden crown, with brilliant jewels. She sat in a litter of glistening white stuff shot with gold and drawn by white horses. The next day was the coronation at West-

minster, followed by a long series of festivities. Henry VIII loved fine clothes and beautiful colours, and hunting and tilting and all sorts of exercise, music, dancing, and acting. He and his gentlemen once dressed up as Robin Hood and his Merry Men, and came suddenly into the queen's rooms to surprise her and her ladies. These were happy years for Queen Catherine, her husband loved and trusted her, and the Court was filled with interesting and clever men both English and foreign; but she had the sorrow of losing two or more baby boys before the birth of her daughter Mary. In 1513 Henry VIII was at war with France and with Scotland; and when he went off himself to France he left the queen, with full powers as Regent, to manage the kingdom in his absence.

Catherine was said to be staying at Buckingham with Edward Fowler, in the fine old 'Castle House' (rebuilt in 1611), when she received the news

> 'Of Flodden's fatal field,
> Where shivered was fair Scotland's spear,
> And broken was her shield!'

The queen wrote to Wolsey that she had been 'horrible busy, making standards, banners, and badges'[2] for her husband's soldiers, and she was very proud to have this news of victory to send him. A gallant Bucks soldier, Lord Scrope of Hambleden, was among the killed. An old yew now in the churchyard at Hughenden is said to have been planted in memory of Flodden Field; the battle was felt to be very momentous, and Scott has immortalized it for us in *Marmion*.

The Church in England, on the brink of the great upheaval of Henry's later years, was zealously persecuting Protestants, with Catherine's full sympathy. Her mother, the pious Isabella, had established the 'Inquisition' in Spain, and she was bringing up her daughter Mary in the same faith. During Catherine's regency Bishop Smith of Lincoln died in his palace at Wooburn in 1513. His character shows both sides of the cultivated and scholarly prelate of the day. He was a lover of learning and the founder of Brasenose College, Oxford, but the poor Protestants of Bucks found in him the most relentless of per-

secutors. A torture-chamber called Little Ease adjoined the palace. Here in 1506 Thomas Chase of Amersham suffered and died under cruel torture with great fortitude; to avoid inquiry he was said to have committed suicide, and was buried with every mark of dishonour in Norland Wood by the side of the road from Wooburn to Little Marlow. Thomas Man, of Amersham, a noted preacher who boasted that he had converted 700 persons to Lollard doctrines, was brought before Bishop Smith in 1511. He recanted and was imprisoned at the Abbey of Oseney, but escaping he resumed his preaching and was burnt as a relapsed heretic in 1518. Cardinal Wolsey was for a short time Bishop of Lincoln, and after Bishop Smith's example was planning the still more magnificent foundation of Christ Church College, Oxford.

In Hambleden Church is a finely carved oak chest, with a variety of armorial bearings, said to have been fashioned out of the head and foot pieces of Wolsey's bedstead. Higher up this green winding valley, fitly called 'The Happy Valley', is Fingest Church, whose solid Norman tower was already centuries old in Wolsey's time; in a field adjacent the Bishops of Lincoln had a hunting-box; and Woolleys, hard by, a place marked in the oldest county maps, is said to derive its name from the wolves that long lingered in the woods, still the haunt of many foxes and badgers. A grim tradition connects this country with a predecessor of Wolsey's at Fingest, Bishop Burghersh, who baptized the Black Prince, and was a great statesman in life; but after death was condemned to wander round his park, a ghost in the dress of a keeper, until the common lands he had enclosed should be restored to the people.

Queen Catherine had a Bucks chaplain, William How, of Wycombe, whom she sent on a mission to Spain, where he was made Bishop of Orense. He received an honorary degree at Oxford when he returned in 1526, and became chaplain to Henry VIII.

Among the thinkers and students of the old faith was John Colet (about 1467–1519), the son of Sir Henry Colet, a rich Bucks landowner of the Mercers' Company, twice Lord Mayor of London. Lady Colet is mentioned in a Claydon will of 1509 as having lent £36 to Dame Margaret

Verney. Their son John was an enthusiastic scholar, and became a popular preacher. Henry VII made him Dean of St. Paul's in 1505. He never changed his simple Oxford habits, wore his black gown where his predecessors had been clothed in purple, and kept a frugal table. He was diligent in preaching and expounding the Bible, often in English; he was full of reforming the Church, and was a close friend of More and Erasmus. He was yet more intent to raise the level of English education. He at once set himself to found a school which was to be managed, not by the dean and chapter, but by the Mercers' Company, wishing 'to diminish ecclesiastical control while he increased the religious tone of the ordinary teaching and enlarged its scope'.

The scholars were 153 poor children, the number of the fishes caught in the miraculous draft. Over the Master's Chair was a figure of the Child Jesus 'of excellent work, in the act of teaching', whom the children coming and going saluted with a hymn; over the figure were two lines in Latin—

> 'Children learn first to form pure minds by me,
> Then add fair learning to your piety.'

To endow his school Dean Colet, after his father's death, transferred his large estates in Bucks, the Manors of Wotton and Weston Turville, &c., and lands in Aston Clinton, Wendover, Sherrington, Bierton, Wingrave, and Aylesbury, &c., to the Mercers 'for the continuance of St. Paul's School for ever'.

While his scheme was taking shape in 1512, a Convocation of the Clergy was called to consider how best to put down the Lollard heresy 'lately revived'. Archbishop Warham asked the dean to preach the opening sermon in St. Paul's. Colet boldly denounced the corruption and ignorance of the clergy, and pleaded for the reform of the Church of England from within. The Lollards were amongst the most attentive members of his vast audience; some, one hopes, had come up from the Chilterns; their misdeeds were forgotten in the storm that fell upon the preacher. He was denounced as a heretic, and it seemed that he, and his school-theories, were to be violently swept away.

But Colet had powerful friends, including the King (who sympathized with his efforts for the revival of classical learning), and he left nothing undone to secure the prosperity of his foundation.

Of his personal fate he was less mindful ; he died a devout Catholic, but though he was careful about the disposal of his books, he left no money for masses for his soul, indeed he had little left to bequeath.

Colet's school is so prosperous at 400 years old that his passionate wish that it should last 'for ever' seems far more probable now than it did in 1512.

In 1517 there was a riot of the apprentices in London on 'Ill May Day', which was so cruelly put down that many mothers saw their boys hung up to the signposts outside their masters' doors.

The queen, hearing of their distress, hurried to the king, and taking his sisters with her, the dowager queens of France and Scotland, Mary and Margaret, they knelt together and with tears and earnest prayers obtained the pardon of the other lads, which intercession the people of London took very kindly, as several Spaniards, Catherine's countrymen, had been killed in the riot. Verses were written in her praise :

'No sooner was this pardon given
But peals of joy rang through the hall,
As though it thundered down from heaven
The Queen's renown amongst them all.'

In the spring of 1520 Henry and Catherine went to a grand ceremonial meeting in France with the young king, Francis I, and his wife Claude, the heiress of Brittany. Amongst the list of those who went in their suite to the Field of the Cloth of Gold are many Bucks names, Sir Roger Wentworth, Sir Adrian Fortescue, Lord Russell of Chenies, Sir Hugo Tyrrell, Sir John Hampden, 'Sir Ralph Verney and the three young esquires,' one of whom was the queen's cupbearer. So great was the extravagant display in armour, dresses, and tents, that gentlemen sold their estates to pay for their clothes.

'O many
Have broke their backs with laying manors on them
For this great journey.'

Queen Catherine had 'a foot-carpet embroidered with pearls'. Amidst the tedious pageantry she had at least the happiness of meeting a good and charming woman in the French queen, Claude of Brittany; they saw each other daily, and received the Communion kneeling side by side, from the hands of Cardinal Wolsey, afterwards Catherine's bitterest enemy.

In the churchwardens' accounts of Wing is an inventory of the church goods in 1528, which includes a border of cloth of gold for the high altar, the gift of Sir Ralph Verney, who had evidently put some of his gorgeous trappings to pious uses after his return. This Sir Ralph married, as his second wife, Anne Weston, maid of honour to Queen Catherine, who gave her a marriage portion of 200 marks and the custody of a minor, Sir John Danvers.

An old inn at Colnbrook, 'The Catherine Wheel,' has kept the proud tradition that Henry and Catherine stayed there on one of their journeys. A great man in the saddle and a lover of open-air sports, his burly figure, with his ready joke and fat smile, was everywhere well known and liked. The merry song to the king's own tune was sung in many a countryside—

'The Hunt is up, the Hunt is up,
And it is wellnigh day;
And Harry our King has gone a' hunting
To bring his deer to bay.
Awake all men, I say again,
Be merry as you may;
For Harry our King has gone a' hunting
To bring his deer to bay.'

Henry's knowledge of theology, his skill in music, his patronage of art and letters, his care for the navy, and his enlightened statesmanship, had won the praise of men like Sir Thomas More and Erasmus; and foreign Courts envied England the possession of such a monarch.

A dark, stormy sunset was to end this brilliant day. Queen Catherine outlived her royal estate and her domestic happiness. A younger and more beautiful woman supplanted her in her husband's affections; separated from her child, 'unqueened, yet like a queen, and daughter to

THE TRIAL OF CATHERINE OF ARRAGON

From the fresco in the Palace of Westminster by F. O. Salisbury

a king', she spent some sad years of poverty and neglect, died at Kimbolton Abbey in the fifty-first year of her age, and was buried in Peterborough Cathedral in 1536. Catherine of Arragon is remembered in Bucks as the founder, or at least the patron, of the art of pillow lace-making, which continued to be a characteristic and flourishing industry for generations. Indeed, it was said in the eighteenth century to be 'the general employment of the female population of the whole county'. The old art and the old Spanish patterns have been revived of late years by the North Bucks Lace Association, and her name is kept by 'Queen Catherine Road' in Steeple Claydon.

From the time of the cruel divorce of Catherine of Arragon, a blight seemed to fall on the Court and those connected with it. Sir Thomas Boleyn (who had succeeded the Botelers as lord of the manor of Aylesbury) saw his beautiful daughter Anne hurried from the throne to the block, and his young son, a poet and diplomatist, was also beheaded in 1536. Sir Francis Weston, nephew of the Lady Verney who waited upon Catherine of Arragon, was executed at the same time. Jane Seymour, whom we may claim as a Bucks lady as she was born at Seymour Court near Marlow, and possessed the lordship of Swanbourne, died when her child, the long desired Prince of Wales, was but a fortnight old; it was remarked that she was the only wife for whom Henry wore black.

In 1539 Sir Ralph Verney, who had been present at the baptism of Edward VI, was sent by the king to receive Anne of Cleves on her arrival. This unfortunate princess kept up her friendship with Sir Ralph in after years, she named his son Sir Edmund Verney, who was Knight of the Shire, as one of her executors, and left him 'a jug of gold with a cover'. A small deed in the muniment room at Claydon about a transfer of land is signed 'K. R. Katherine the Queen'. Katherine Parr was connected by marriage with several families in Bucks. Beachampton House, close down upon the Ouse, still dignified in neglect, is supposed to have been her residence. It was part of the dowry of the queens of England; two stone gateposts mark the entrance to what was once a house of considerable extent; a panelled drawing-room and a small richly

carved staircase with the royal Tudor badges, on the verge of decay, traditionally connects Katherine Parr, the last of the long procession of Henry's queens, with the county.

In Bucks the name of the great Tudor monarch has been handed down as the Blue-Beard of popular story; and the managers of a village school recently objected to the hanging there of his portrait by Holbein, on the score that he had had too many wives.

[1] Miss Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England.*
[2] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

CHAPTER VII

'BELL, BOOK, AND CANDLE'

From the marriage of Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn to the middle of Elizabeth's reign was a time of distracting changes in the order of public worship, and of much suffering, uncertainty, and unrest. 'Bell, Book, and Candle,' and all the familiar symbols of the old faith seemed to be thrown into the melting-pot; and when the upheaval under Henry VIII and the still more drastic changes under the boy-king Edward VI were followed by the violent reaction under Queen Mary, 'men's minds,' as old Fuller puts it, 'stood at gaze, it being dead water with them which way the tide would turn.'

The suppression of the monasteries and the disappearance of abbot and friar made less difference in Bucks than elsewhere, as there were no great abbeys here like St. Albans or Oseney over the borders; yet the troublous times could not but be felt in every parish. The Bishops of Lincoln in the fifteenth century had complained bitterly of the Bucks portion of their diocese; the clergy were poor, many churches ruinous, the monastic houses absorbed the great tithes of the livings under their care, and 'there was an undercurrent of heresy among the laity'. But

when changes came, the great wealth accumulated in the monasteries and around the popular shrines, instead of being devoted to religion and education, was mostly absorbed by the king and the nobles. The chantry chapels, many of which had come to be used as parish churches, shared the fate of the monasteries. Glorious buildings were reduced to ruins, brasses melted down, stained glass broken in pieces, wall paintings scraped away, the bells 'gambled for, or sold into Russia', priceless libraries dispersed, the paper and parchment sold to grocers and soap-boilers, or sent abroad.

The ship of the Church was labouring in heavy seas, storms were succeeding each other from opposite points of the compass, with a bewildering succession of sailing directions from Geneva and from Rome. During the reign of Edward VI, church plate and ornaments, often of great value, would be forbidden and sold for the king's use, and in a year or two later the churchwardens would be ordered to provide at their own expense the very things of which they had been deprived. Fonts were destroyed and basins used instead, and then again basins were strictly forbidden.

An odd bit of church property belonged to Great Marlow, which must have greatly offended the Puritans; '5 pairs of Garters and bells, 5 coats and a fool's, with 4 feathers,' were let out to the Morris dancers of neighbouring villages.

Mr. John Myers has written some interesting studies of the church plate of the county in the records published by the Bucks Archaeological Society. Many cups, made in 1569, are still used for the Communion. We may be thankful that the very changeableness of the time often delayed the destruction of ancient monuments. Amongst the most enduring of church possessions are the bells, and we have the advantage in this county of a learned and most interesting volume on *The Church Bells of Bucks*, by Mr. Alfred H. Cocks. He computes that we have more than 1,000 bells, of which nearly 100 date before the Reformation.[1] 'Within a radius of eleven miles round Buckingham there are nine bells, all apparently of the fourteenth century and of local manufacture. The single bell at Foscot, the trebles at Little Linford, and Barton

Hartshorn and Thornton are amongst them, and the second at Beachampton.'[2]

The early bell-founders were called Potters; there seem to have been local foundries at Newport Pagnell, Bow Brickhill, and Sherington as early as the reign of Edward I; at any rate in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth there was a flourishing bell-foundry at Buckingham, the very site of which has been forgotten. John and George Appowell were the Master Founders, and held good positions in the borough; they were succeeded by Bartholomew Atton and Robert Newcome from about 1590 to 1633, after which no bells were known to be cast there. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was a famous foundry at Drayton Parslow, worked by several generations of the Chandler family, descended from Anthony Chandler (the blacksmith of that village in Tudor times). The Chandlers were followed in 1752 by Hall, who carried on their business, until the record appears in the parish register of the burial of 'Edward Hall, poor old Bell-founder, February 9, 1755'. Thus many of our fine bells were of local make, and very individual in ornament and character. It is a matter for regret that this skilled work is no longer carried on in the county.

The early bells bore pious inscriptions (as well as the founders' stamp), some of which were quaint and beautiful, such as 'Sonoro Sono Meo Sono Deo' (with my sonorous sound, I sound unto God); 'Voco Vos Orate Venite' (I call you come and pray); 'Vox Ego sum Vitæ' (I am the Voice of Life); all taken from Bucks bells; or on a later Tingewick bell in English,

'When I ring or toll my voice is spent;
Men may come and hear God's word, and so repent.'

Others had prayers to Christ, the Virgin, or the Saints, according to the dedication of the church they were made for. But even the bells suffered from the uncertainty of the times; was it safer to pray, or not to pray, to Our Lady and the Saints? So 'in the hottest time of the Reformation, 1534 to '36', and again in Mary's reign, the founders produced nonsense inscriptions, or 'Alphabet Bells', on which letters are inscribed merely in alpha-

betical order that they might not get into trouble with either side ; a cowardice unworthy of a noble craft.

So much for the Bell : as to the Book—we may say that England's best possessions came out of this time of storm and stress, the version of the Bible in glorious English, and the Book of Common Prayer. They too were alternately authorized and banished, and the Prayer Book suffered adversity until the Restoration of 1660. The fine old folio Bibles chained to the reading-desk were often centres of disturbance.

At Chesham Bois, a tenant of the Cheyne family complained that he had been evicted, because he read the New Testament that the king had put into the churches. At Horton, a curate, who was preparing holy water, was so worried and irritated by a tailor of Colnbrook who read out the Bible in the church in a loud tone for the edification of himself and others, that he finally sent the tailor about his business, having vainly tried to moderate his voice.[2]

Before the Reformation, Latin service-books, missals, breviaries, &c., existed in the churches, somewhat varied according to the use of the particular diocese. Side by side with these service-books for the priests, from the fourteenth century onwards, were books for the religious teaching of the laity containing the Psalter, with public and private forms of prayer, in English and Latin known as Books of Hours, or Primers ; all these contributed materials to the Book of Common Prayer, which so happily preserved for us the forms of devotion that had been in use for centuries. A discovery of great interest was made in Addington Church during its restoration by the Rt. Hon. J. G. Hubbard, afterwards Lord Addington, who had bought Addington Manor. On August 5, 1857, the workmen came upon six books walled up in the north wall of the chancel in order to preserve them ; they were in perfect condition, and the initials T. A. were those of Thos. Andrewes, rector there during the first years of Elizabeth's reign. Browne Willis, writing about 1750, speaks of another find of older missals in the chancel wall which he thinks were hidden by Wm. Hall, the last rector presented by the Priors of St. John of Jerusalem, who died in 1546 ;

these books were probably found in 1710, when the church was restored by Thomas Busby. The missals then found have disappeared; but the books discovered in 1857 have been rebound and well cared for. One of them is Henry VIII's reformed Sarum Primer in Latin and English, printed by Petyt, 1541; only one other copy of this edition is known to exist, and is at the Roman Catholic college at Stonyhurst. The Prayer Book itself reflected the changes of the times; in Cranmer's Litany of 1544 the old invocations to the Virgin and the saints were retained with a new prayer against 'the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities'. Then the archbishop himself was martyred, and both sets of prayers omitted. At Bletchley a Prayer Book of 1638 said to have belonged to Charles I, bound in red velvet with silver clasps; with a Bible and a copy of *Eikon Basilike*, was given to the Parish by Browne Willis. Another wave of change swept the Prayer Book itself from our churches, till it was finally restored and amended in 1660 and 1662.

Parish registers were started by an injunction of Thomas, Lord Cromwell, in 1538; every parish was bound to provide a book and a locked coffer to keep it in, and every Sunday morning the clergyman was ordered to bring it out, and in the presence of the churchwardens to record in it 'all the weddings, christenings and buryings made the whole week before'.[3] This excellent scheme, which entailed little or no expense, has been called 'the one commendable action of this marvellously shrewd but absolutely unscrupulous man'. The first books were of paper and perishable, afterwards parchment was enjoined; a well-preserved register is the most valuable foundation for the history of a parish. Two Bucks registers (of Stoke Hammond and Old Wolverton) are among the oldest in England, and contain entries even before 1538. Other facts besides those enjoined were entered by degrees, as when a baby at Thornton was 'found hanging in a basket on the gates which open out of the great yard into the highway', or a little black page-boy described as 'a Moor of Guinea' was baptized at Middle Claydon (1689), several members of the Verney family standing as sponsors—we get valuable sidelights in this way about the manners of the times.

We learn when an epidemic caused a sudden increase in the burials. At Little Marlow in 1621, 'Mary the wife of William Borlase July 18, a gratious ladye she was, dyed of the plague as did 18 more'; at Stoke Poges in the same year, and at Lavendon and Newport Pagnell in 1666, the registers show a terrible plague mortality. The register at Little Brickhill preserves the fact that this village was once an Assize Town, and that forty-two criminals were executed and buried there between 1561 and 1620. At Chesham in 1589 is the burial of a pedlar 'slain in a fray by another pedlar' coming in together to a fair, and the entries of a man (1591) and a widow (1603) both killed by falls out of a cherry-tree. From that register we also learn of the flourishing leather trade at Chesham in Elizabethan days, shoemakers, tanners, curriers, and glovers abounding. From the registers and from the less enduring tombstones, interesting study may be made of local names, and compared with those now on shop-fronts and in school registers.

Often the family names persist in a small area, and are quite different from those a few miles off, and if Christian names were also noted and explained, we should not have the clipped forms, Lizzie, Maggie, Nelly, and such like, of the fine old English names Elizabeth, Margaret, and Eleanor which are links with a long past.

To return after this digression to the reign of Edward VI.

Of the candles, censers, crosses, and other ornaments, many had been sold before 1552, as at Hambleden 'for the relief of the poor and the comfort of the parish', but there was no uniformity in the interpretation of rubrics. In June 1553 a letter was sent by the Privy Council to the gentlemen of the county, to recommend to them John Knox; and the stern old Scotchman preached in Amersham Church; a month or so later the open preaching of Calvinism was dangerous. On the death of Edward VI, Sir William Windsor of Bradenham, high sheriff, and Sir Edmund Peckham proclaimed Queen Mary in Bucks, and the county generally supported her against Lady Jane Grey. Lord Windsor, Lord Hastings, and the Peckhams raised 4,000 men for her service. In reward for this early support at a critical time, Queen Mary bestowed municipal honours on the towns of Aylesbury,

Buckingham, and Wycombe. Sir Edward Windsor, son of the sheriff, served with Philip at the siege of St. Quintin, in 1557, and did gallantly.

One other aspect of the Reformation deserves to be considered—its effect on the educational endowments of the county. When the Act of Edward VI, in 1584, abolished chantries and colleges, the old grammar schools lost most of their endowments; in Bucks, Eton was strong enough to retain them, and was exempted from plunder. The other grammar schools were robbed of lands, and given fixed yearly payments, which prevented their income growing with the growth of wealth in the country, and by the fall in the value of money reduced them gradually 'from a fair living to a miserable pittance'. Eton College was ordered in 1553, just before the death of Edward VI, to convert the church goods 'from monuments of superstition to necessary uses', which took the form of silver wine-pots, jugs and bowls for the buttery; a little later the beautiful pictures in the chapel, painted in 1480, were ordered to be whitewashed by the college barber, 'so preserving them for rediscovery in 1848.' In 1563, the court having left London for Windsor owing to the plague, a select company was dining in Sir William Cecil's chamber, of whom Roger Ascham was one. 'I have strange news brought me,' saith Mr. Secretary, 'that divers Scholars of Eton be run away from the School for fear of beating. Whereupon Mr. Secretarie took occasion to wish that some more discretion were in many Schoolmasters in using correction . . . who punish rather the weakness of nature than the fault of the scholar.' This conversation produced the retirement of the head master of Eton, and the writing of a famous book on education, Ascham's *Schoolmaster*; but it is doubtful whether the rule of the rod was much, if at all, impaired.

Sir Henry Savile, provost from 1596 to 1622, did much for the Eton College library; he dispatched a carpenter to Oxford to see the fittings of the new Bodleian Library, and 'Joyce the waterman' brought his books from London up the river. Savile even set up a printing-press at Eton, and produced there his magnificent edition of *Chrysostom* in eight folio volumes, at the cost of £8,000.

Edward VI's Royal Latin School in Buckingham was held from the time of Edward VI to that of Edward VII in the old chantry chapel of St. John the Baptist and St. Thomas. The chantry was founded by Matthew Stratton,[2] who was Archdeacon of Buckingham 1223 to 1268. It was rebuilt by John Ruding, Canon of Lincoln and Prebendary of Buckingham, 1471 to 1481. There was a painting over the altar of the Lamb, the Baptist's emblem, 'but it was destroyed in 1688 by the schoolboys as a relic of popery;' underneath were Ruding's arms and his motto 'May God amend all'. The chantry was suppressed by Henry VIII; Browne Willis attributes the modern foundation to a bequest of Dame Isabel Denton in 1540, to which Edward VI added an annuity from the Exchequer. Records have lately been found of the existence of a school as far back as 1423, but its connexion with the modern school has not been traced. The Thornton Grammar School of the time of Henry VI was transferred to Buckingham in 1592 and the endowments were merged in one. The Buckingham Latin School had a chequered career, until the County Council started it again with new buildings (under the scheme of 1904) as a mixed school for boys and girls.

The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, was created in 1550 out of the endowment of a Hospital of St. John the Baptist built about 1180 for a master, brethren and sisters. In 1551 the buildings were sold to the borough, the whole of the funds being devoted to the school. There is a quaint entry in the records, showing that the burgesses are content that the schoolmaster shall have 'the pleasure and profit of a Cow or twain . . . and 5 loads of wood yearly'; this settlement was upset by Queen Mary; and when Elizabeth restored the endowment to the borough, it was saddled with an almshouse charity which detracted from school funds and complicated its accounts as its 'pleasures and profits' had to be divided. The first head master on the records was Gerard Dobson, an Eton scholar and Vicar of Wycombe; he educated Edmund Waller the poet and politician, who gratefully remembered his teaching. The school is now extremely flourishing, and is rapidly outgrowing its old buildings.

The Challoner School at Amersham (1620), the Borlase School at Marlow (1628), and the Aylesbury Grammar School (1687), belong to a later generation, but they, with the modern County High School for Girls at High Wycombe (1901) and the County Secondary School at Wolverton (1902), are all working happily under the County Council, with an educational centre at Aylesbury. A secondary school at Slough will soon be added to their number. Some twenty elementary schools were endowed in Bucks between 1648 and 1793.

[1] A. H. Cocks, *Church Bells of Bucks.*
[2] Victoria County History, *Bucks.*
[3] Rev. Dr. Cox, *History of Parish Registers.*

CHAPTER VIII

QUEEN ELIZABETH WITH HER GALLANTS OF THE SWORD AND PEN

No story of one of the Home Counties would be complete without the great figure of Queen Bess and her progresses and pageants.

It seems curious that while English sailors and statesmen were then first dreaming that Britannia might rule the seas, and were disputing with Spain the mastery of a New World, the queen herself travelled so little, and her stately journeys often meant a removal from Chelsea to Greenwich, or from Hampton Court to Whitehall. At least we may be glad that she and her splendid court paid more than one visit to Bucks. Indeed, some years of her stormy girlhood were passed in the south of the county.

Edward VI in 1550 granted to his 'dearly-loved sister', Princess Elizabeth, 'the Manor and Mansion of Ashridge, formerly the Religious House of the Bonhommes'. Here she lived in retirement until 1554, when on a suspicion of her being concerned in Sir Thomas Wyatt's conspiracy, in which some Bucks Protestants were involved, Queen Mary sent down to Ashridge to arrest her sister.

Elizabeth was ill at the time, but was peremptorily carried off in a litter. She took another forced journey through Bucks in 1558, when brought from Woodstock; in passing through Colnbrook the wheel came off her coach, and she spent the night at the George Hotel there. Sir Robert Dormer, to whom Henry VIII gave the Manor of Wing, after the dissolution of the monasteries, received Princess Elizabeth at Ascott House.

One of the pleasant incidents of Elizabeth's reign was her life-long friendship for Sir John Fortescue of Salden, Mursley. His father was hastily beheaded by Elizabeth's father, about 1539, and Sir Adrian Fortescue's name has been recently included by the Pope in a list of the Catholic martyrs who suffered under Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and James I. The little boy of eight years old was brought up as a Protestant by his mother, and became a distinguished scholar. Queen Mary appointed him as tutor to the Princess Elizabeth. He was the same age as the princess, and her cousin, through the Boleyns; they had the same love of learning, and were close friends. Elizabeth, on her accession, made him Master of the Wardrobe, 'trusting him,' as was said, 'with the ornaments of her soul and body.' He was in parliament all through her reign, generally as member for Buckingham or for the county. He carried a motion that no member should enter the House with his spurs on, 'for offending of others.'

In 1589 Fortescue was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a member of the Privy Council, and became very wealthy. He built a great house at Salden, in the parish of Mursley, where he was reported to have a household of sixty servants, including his own butcher and baker, and it was the work of one man to open and shut the many windows and shutters daily. It was perhaps not completed in time to receive Queen Elizabeth, but James I and Anne, his queen, stayed here, with their elder children, Henry and Elizabeth, and Anne restored a decayed hospital at Newport Pagnell.

Sir John Fortescue's love of literature lasted all his life, and he presented books to the new Bodleian Library at Oxford. In spite of his father's fate, he was a persecutor of the Catholics, and sat on a commission for banishing seminary priests and Jesuits.

Sir John died in 1607, and his monument is to be seen in Mursley Church; his descendants went back to the Church of Rome, their Bucks property was sold, and in the eighteenth century Salden House was completely pulled down. Two coats of arms on painted glass were removed by Browne Willis to Fenny Stratford Church; and a beautiful little manor-house close to the church at Swanbourne still remains, which is said to have been built by Queen Elizabeth's friend, Sir John Fortescue, for his children.

The queen, on her return from a visit to the University of Oxford, was entertained in 1566 by Edward, Lord Windsor, at Bradenham. 'Miles Windsor, kinsman to this Lord, spoke an oration to the Queen, which she noticed with much approbation to the Spanish Ambassador then present.' Arthur, Lord Grey, received the queen at Whaddon Hall in 1568.

In 1570 she visited Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, at Chenies; he was an active member of her Privy Council, and had taken a large share in the religious settlement, and the drawing up of the new liturgy. Queen Elizabeth was also entertained at Shardeloes by William Tothill, who married a daughter of Sir John Denham. Joan, the eldest of their thirty-three children, brought the property to her husband, Francis Drake, in whose family the fine house and park has remained. Sir William Drake was a benefactor of Amersham, where he built the market-house; pictures of Elizabeth and of Sir Christopher Hatton still exist at Shardeloes.

The most picturesque figure in Bucks at that time was Sir Henry Lee, who represented the county in parliament, as his father had done before him, and owned 'three goodly mansions' near Aylesbury. As Queen Elizabeth's champion and a Knight of the Garter, he was a great man at court. He had served in four reigns, and foreign ambassadors spoke of him as a most accomplished 'man of arms', who would 'break a lance with great dexterity and commendation'. Every year on the day of the queen's accession, November 17, Sir Henry Lee 'presented him at the tilt', and maintained 'the honour of her sacred majesty' against all comers. In the thirty-third year of her reign, when the queen and her

champion were both 'by age overtaken', he resigned his office, and in 1590 Elizabeth honoured her old friend by spending two days with him at Quarendon, where a famous masque was performed in her honour.

A crowned pillar was set up in the grounds, in front of which the old knight piled his armour, and clad in black velvet with 'a buttoned cap of the country fashion' on his head ('my helmet now shall make a hive for bees'), he besought the queen to accept his prayers in lieu of his arms, and to

> 'vouchsafe this aged man his right
> To be your bedesman now, that was your knight'.[1]

The fine house of Quarendon, with its gardens and the park that fed '3,000 sheep beside other cattle', has entirely disappeared; only the little church remains, forlornly, in a bare field, and the gallant old challenger and bedesman is buried there.

Another time Queen Elizabeth visited Yewden House, Hambleden, Bisham Abbey, and Marlow. Out of the beech-woods came a wild man with a club to salute her, with the god of the woods, Sylvanus, who wished Elizabeth 'as many years as our fields have ears of corn, both infinite; and to her enemies, as many troubles as the wood hath leaves, all intolerable'.[1]

On a hill hard by sat Pan, and two virgins keeping sheep, and as they kept their sheep, they were virtuously sewing in their samplers—for the queen would have no one to be idle. Pan came forward and paid her the most charming rustic compliments. 'Green be the grass', he said, 'where your Highness treads; calm the water where you row, sweet the air where you breathe, long the life that you live, happy the people that you love.' Lower down in the corn-fields Ceres appeared in a harvest-cart, having a crown of wheat-ears, and with some dainty verses presented the queen with a jewel from 'the Lady of the Farm', Lady Russell.

All who took part in the welcome knew that they were acting to a most appreciative guest; and the queen loved it all, and could take her share in music, poetry and wit, with the best of them.

It was consistent with Elizabeth's love of outdoor sports and fresh air that she did not admire the sheltered sites in which the old manor-houses were generally built. A Bishop of London won the name of Mar-Elms by his complaisance in cutting down the thick trees that impeded the queen's view from the windows of Fulham Palace. At Hampden House her host, Griffith Hampden, cut the Queen's Gap through his park, to facilitate her journey from Oxford, and there is a story that when she complained overnight that she could not see the view for the trees, her loyal host and his men set to work so early that the trees were down when she looked out of window in the morning.

'In her progresses she was always most easy of approach; private persons, magistrates, men, women, and children came joyfully without any fear to wait upon her.' The complaints of a farmer who had been too ruthlessly deprived of his ducks and capons for her table, were kindly listened to. 'She never appeared tired, nor out of temper, nor annoyed at the most importunate suitor, not even the defeat of the Spanish Armada more won the hearts of her people, than the way she rode about the country and received their simple love and loyalty.

> 'Renownèd Queen of this renownèd land,
> Renownèd land, because a fruitful soil:
> Renownèd land through people of the same:
> And thrice renowned by this her Virgin Queene—
> So dear a darling is Elizabeth.'

In a dialogue of 1591 it is pleasant to find the queen compared to 'a gentle mistress of children' guiding her scholars' hands with her own to make them write fair letters, and giving the little ones all the credit, proving that there were gentle and patient teachers when theories of education were most severe. We have stories too of an even more famous wayfarer.

Shakespeare passed through the woodlands of Bucks on his way from Stratford-on-Avon to London. There was a green track much frequented by strolling players and itinerants, which led from the Roman road of Akeman Street to Bernwood Forest through Grendon Underwood. This village, 'the dirtiest town that ever stood', though thus

QUEEN ELIZABETH

From the title-page of the Bishops' Bible

maligned in winter, was lovely in its summer greenery. Here Shakespeare stayed in an old house, once the Ship Inn, then, as now, belonging to the family of the Pigotts of Doddershall, who have lived for centuries in the county. Here Shakespeare came across the 'ancient and most quiet watchmen', whom he immortalized as 'Goodman Verges, and honest neighbour Dogberry'. The actor-poet outraged these worthies by passing a summer's night in the porch, or perchance in the church itself. They could only suppose that he came to rob the parish chest. He was arrested, with all the noise and importance he made such good use of in his comedy; and when at his request the chest was opened and nothing was found to be missing, the constables 'thanked God that they were rid of a knave', and he is reputed to have reproached them with making 'Much ado about nothing'.

The sylvan scenes in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* are also said to belong to Grendon, and those who have wandered through these woods in spring know the 'faint primrose beds' that Hermia loved, and feel the 'briars and thorns at their apparel snatch', just as they did three hundred years ago; we can find to-day 'a bank whereon the wild thyme blows', the roses and 'sweet honeysuckle', and the ivy still 'enrings the barky fingers of the elm'.

These stories were collected on the spot by Aubrey, the antiquary, who lived within twenty-six years of Shakespeare's death, and claims to have met 'Master Constable' at Grendon in 1642, in a green old age.

Another of Shakespeare's comedies is connected with South Bucks; in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Mrs. Ford orders her men to carry the basket of dirty linen in which Sir John Falstaff is hidden, 'to the laundress in Datchet-Mead.'

Grendon, in 1598, contributed 'beeves and muttons' for the queen's household. But her best-loved pastures were those of Creslow (near Winslow), placed by a special deed of Elizabeth under 'the chief clerk of our kitchen for the benefit of our household'.

The queen's bill of fare included, besides the choice Creslow beef and mutton, 'great birds as herons, swans, and bitterns,' down to the small teals, plovers, and baked

larks. She had but little of vegetables or fruit on her table, but on New Year's Day, 1589, she accepted ' a fair pie of quinces ' as a present from her sergeant of the pastry.

Almost at the end of her reign the queen was splendidly entertained at Stoke Court in South Bucks (the home of her old friend, Sir Christopher Hatton) by Sir Edward Coke, her Attorney-General ; a narrow green track out of the Hambleden Valley is still called Dudley's Lane, from her magnificent favourite, the Earl of Leicester.

' Her Majesty and suite left Bradenham House on horseback, passing through some of the loveliest bits of primeval forest of Walter's Ash, over Downley Common, through Tinkers Wood ; down Hobbes' Lane to Wycombe, where she was greeted right royally, and spent the night at Bassetbury House, belonging to John Raunce.'

Among the illustrious men of the reign were the Chaloners, a Yorkshire family settled in Bucks. Sir Thomas Chaloner, author and diplomatist (1521–65), was granted the Manor of Steeple Claydon by Queen Mary, who inherited it from her mother, Catherine of Arragon, and as the family monument in the church records, ' he was a great soldier and scholar knighted by the Protector of Edward VI (on the field of Musselburgh). He was by Queen Elizabeth, for his bravery and learning, sent ambassador to the Emperor Ferdinand, and to Philip II, king of Spain.' The queen made a grant in maintenance of lamps in the church of Steeple Claydon.

Dr. Robert Chaloner, Rector of Amersham (probably of the same family), founded free grammar schools both in Yorkshire and Bucks. His name still lives in the Chaloner School at Amersham, which after flickering down to a little company of four boys in the early nineteenth century, has been saved by a new scheme, and new buildings opened in 1905. Dr. Chaloner's school now receives girls as well as boys, and his endowment is supplemented by grants from the County Council.

In Fulmer Church, which he built, is a fine altar tomb to Sir Marmaduke Dayrell, ' servant to the famous Queen Elizabeth in her wars both by sea and land, and afterwards in her household . . . he was employed in matters of great trust for fifty years.' The name of these Dayrells has been

kept by one of the Lillingstones, where the family lived from the time of King John until 1796, when the property was sold to the Robarts family. There is a fine fifteenth-century brass to an older Dayrell in the church.

Walter Haddon (1516–71), born at Lillingstone Dayrell, and an Eton scholar, was a well-known statesman and writer at Elizabeth's court. He attributed to his mother all the learning that he had; he translated the Prayer Book into Latin, and served the queen as ambassador at Bruges and elsewhere; she made him her Master of Requests. Not being 'on progress' she was seldom in the mood to look at the petitions he brought, and one day coming into her presence she called out to him bluntly 'Fie, sloven, thy new boots stink!' 'Madam,' replied Haddon, 'it is not my boots which stink, but the old stale petitions that have been so long in my bag unopened'; an answer which one is sure Her Highness appreciated.

Another Lillingstone Dayrell man of note was Richard Smith (1590–1675), one of the earliest book-collectors, a haunter of sales and second-hand bookstalls. He held an office of profit in the Poultry, which enabled him to indulge his taste.

A name to be honourably remembered is that of William Alley (1510–70), born at Chipping Wycombe, and educated at Eton. He was a famous preacher and student, and opened his library to any needy scholars, 'whose company and conference he earnestly desired.' Alley became Bishop of Exeter; the queen, 'out of the great respect she had for him, sent him each New Year's Day a silver cup.' He was 'very courteous and gentle, at table full of honest speeches, with learning and pleasantness, and for exercise, a great player at bowls'.[2] Did the wits of the court call him Bowling Alley? The bishop wrote the *Poor Man's Library* and a Hebrew Grammar, and made the translation of the Pentateuch for the magnificent new edition of the Scriptures in English known as the Bishops' Bible—a black-letter folio printed in 1568. A simple and thoughtful portrait of the queen appeared on the title-page; the book was supplied to the cathedrals, and every Church dignitary was ordered to keep a copy in his hall for the use of his servants and visitors. The impetus given to the printing of the

Bible in English was one of the glories of Elizabeth's reign. In 1577, a new name, well known in South Bucks, that of Christopher Barker (1529–99) appeared among the privileged queen's printers. In 1588 Barker obtained an exclusive patent for the printing of English Bibles and Prayer Books. Between 1575 and 1599 more than seventy editions of the whole or parts of the English Bible were produced by this famous printer. To Christopher Barker we owe the first Bibles in roman type, instead of the earlier black letter. He is mentioned among the gentlemen of the county as sending one horse and one foot-soldier to the queen's muster at Tilbury, to repel the Spanish invasion. His country house was at Datchet, where he died ; there is a tablet to him in the church, and an entry of his burial, in the register ; but his gift to the church of one of his finely printed Bibles has disappeared.

A famous scholar and writer, Richard Hooker (1544–1600), author of *The Ecclesiastical Polity*, was for a time a Bucks rector. He distinguished himself at Oxford by his learning, and still more by ' his dove-like simplicity '. He is described as ' an obscure harmless man in poor clothes, of a mean stature and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul ; of so mild and humble a nature that his poor parish clerk and he did never talk, but with both their hats on, or both off at the same time '.[2] Hooker was an active and exemplary parish priest, but though he was a master and a creator of the great English prose of that day, he had no repute as a preacher ; ' his voice was low, stature little, gesture none at all, standing stone still in the pulpit.' It was as the champion and exponent of the Church of England, in his great book, that he earned the title of the ' Judicious Hooker '.

A well-known tale of Isaac Walton's has made his incumbency of Drayton-Beauchamp historical. With characteristic shyness he committed the choice of his wife to a good woman who had provided him with a lodging, when he reached London, ' wet, weary, and weather beaten ', after a ride from Oxford. His landlady bestowed upon him her own daughter, Joan, whose chief portion was a shrewish tongue. Her loud commands Hooker meekly obeyed, and when two beloved pupils of his Oxford days, Sandys and

Cranmer, came into Bucks to see him, they found him with the *Odes of Horace* in his hand, 'like innocent Abel tending his few sheep in a common field.' When their old friend took them into the house, 'their best enjoyment was his quiet company', but this was soon broken into by the wife's voice calling upon Richard to come and rock the cradle, and so little peace did she give them, that they were forced to leave Hooker to his wife's company, and find 'a quieter lodging for themselves'.

But the visit had lasting effects; the youths had powerful relations in the Church, and they gave them no peace till Hooker was made Master of the Temple, and Drayton-Beauchamp knew him no more.

Three years after Hooker's death the great queen died. She left an enduring mark on our history and literature, even in the very preface of our English Bible, where we are told that it was the expectation of the enemies of England 'that upon the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen Elizabeth of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and ... who was to direct the unsettled State.'

The estimates of her character and policy have differed widely; here we may remember her as an accomplished and gracious lady riding about our green ways—greeting, and greeted by her people.

[1] Nichols, *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth.*
[2] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

CHAPTER IX

UNDER 'GENTLE JAMIE'

THREE events connect Bucks with the reign of James I: the constitutional struggle just beginning between the Crown and the Commons, the persecution of Catholics, and the translation of the Authorized Version of the English Bible.

On January 11, 1604, writs were issued for the first

Parliament of the new reign. King James, as his manner was, gave his subjects much good advice; they were to select members who did not seek only to advance their own interests, who were not of turbulent humour or superstitious blindness; no bankrupts or outlaws. The proclamation finally ordered that all returns should be made to the Court of Chancery, which should be the judge of the validity of elections. This last claim would have reduced the Commons to mere nominees of the Crown.

Parliament met with the feeling that a crisis was at hand, and the first matter that brought the Commons into collision with the Crown was the right of the member for Bucks to take his seat.

The election had been held at Brickhill, as the plague was bad at Aylesbury; the gentry desired to elect Sir John Fortescue, Queen Elizabeth's old friend, but cries of 'a Goodwin, a Goodwin' from the freeholders secured the return of Sir Francis Goodwin. Sir Francis was in debt, and it was doubtful whether or not he came under the definition of an outlaw; the Court of Chancery pronounced his election void, issued a fresh writ and declared Sir John Fortescue to be member for Bucks. The same claim had been made by the Crown in 1586, and defeated, but this time the Commons resolved to settle once for all the right to decide on the election of their own members. The House summoned Goodwin to the bar, and having heard his case, ordered him to take the oath and his seat, which he did accordingly. The Lords sent down a message to the Commons asking for information about the Bucks election; the Commons refused to give it, as it was a private matter that concerned themselves alone; pressed again by the king, they consented to a conference. With admirable prudence they confined their opposition to the main point, though the king had raised several others—'The Prince's command is like a thunderbolt,' said one member, 'and the roaring of a lion.' Mr. Speaker had a private interview with the king, lasting from 8 to 10 a.m. At length the king acknowledged that the Commons were the proper judges of the constitution of their own House, but asked them as a personal favour to annul both returns. This they consented to do, having obtained a letter from Goodwin that

he was not anxious to retain his seat, and at the fresh election the choice fell on Sir Christopher Pigott, whom the king had lately knighted. Sir Francis Goodwin was elected the following year by the borough of Buckingham, and he was again chosen for the county in 1620. His granddaughter married Philip, Lord Wharton.

It seemed as if a member for Bucks was destined to be a stumbling-block to the Stuarts. While Scottish affairs were being discussed in the next session (1606), Sir Christopher Pigott, without removing his hat or rising from his seat, was heard to speak in a loud voice. Called to order, he rose and began violently to abuse the Scots, whom he called thieves, murderers, and rogues—'They have not suffered above two kings to die in their beds these 200 years,' he said, and 'our king hath hardly escaped them'; he continued with a torrent of invective. The astonished members stared at each other, but took no further notice, possibly agreeing with him, as the king's Scotch favourites were most unpopular. Three days later the House received an angry message from the king, 'that he did much mislike their neglect in not interrupting the speaker in the instant', and commanded them to take immediate steps to bring the delinquent to justice. The Commons hesitated. 'They knew not,' they said, 'what way to censure him for it, freedom of speech in their House being a darling privilege.' They decided that Pigott was not accountable to any other authority, but proceeded to deal with him themselves with great severity. Sir Christopher disclaimed any intention of disloyalty, but he was made to kneel down and told by the Speaker, Sir Edward Philips, of Hogshaw, who was also his brother-in-law, that his offence was 'so apparently heinous . . . that the House would give no reason for their judgement', but he was dismissed from his place as Knight of the Shire, and was to be kept in the Tower a prisoner during the pleasure of the House.

In this sudden calamity the unfortunate man, ill and miserable, turned over in his mind what friend would stand by him. Martin Lister, member for Clitheroe, had lately hired Claydon, where he had been accused of cutting down old trees, and ploughing up old pastures, but Pigott was his neighbour, not his landlord, and to Lister he appealed.

Lister represented to the House that Sir Christopher Pigott was 'sick of a burning fever and in danger of his life', and presented a letter from him of humble apology. The Commons, possibly ashamed of the vehemence of their loyalty, released him within a fortnight of his arrest. He retired to Doddershall for the remainder of his life, to reflect on the imprudence of attacking a Scotchman, and Anthony Tyringham, fourth member for the seat, in two years, was chosen in his stead. Sir Thomas Crewe, member for Aylesbury, was Speaker in the last Parliament of the reign.

The changes that followed the Reformation had brought great hardships upon the families who refused to abandon the old faith. Many Catholics were perfectly loyal Englishmen, and the Dormers and the Throgmortons sent up man and horse for the defence of the queen and the realm, as cheerfully as the Hampdens, Pigotts, and Verneys.

But when Jesuits and seminary priests educated abroad conspired against Elizabeth's life, and attempts were actually made to assassinate her, grave political, as well as religious, issues were involved. 'The Catholic whose zeal had been stirred up by the new missionaries was far more hostile to the Government that supported Protestantism than his father had been before him, and repression consequently tended to become more and more severe.' Among the most famous of the Roman Catholic families in Bucks were the Dormers of Wing, the Peckhams of Denham, the Digbys of Gayhurst, and the Throgmortons of Weston Underwood; other names given as 'harbourers of priests' were Gifford, of Steeple Claydon, and Mercer, of East Claydon. Robert Gray, chaplain to the Catholic Lord Montagu, was wont to go with him to visit his son-in-law Sir Robert Dormer at Wing; Gray was often imprisoned, and was credited with knowing all the priests and Jesuits in Bucks, and their haunts. Persecutions, fines, and rewards had developed an odious type of informer known as a priest-finder; very little evidence was required against a Papist. Priests were concealed in private houses who for years never went outside the doors; and to harbour or help a priest was enough to condemn a Protestant. As late as 1601 'Thomas Hackshot, a stout young man of Mursley, was executed at

Tyburn for rescuing a Romish priest out of the hands of an officer'.[1]

At Stoke Poges, in 1564, Mrs. Isabel Hampden had her house roughly searched and ransacked; no priest was discovered, but 'a pathetic list remains among the State Papers, of the innocent books, pictures, and objects of devotion carried off', including a letter from the Pope. In 1586 the house of Sir Christopher Browne at Boarstall was suddenly entered by a magistrate and searched from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., the gates being guarded all the time. 'Coffers, cupboards, closets, trunks, caskets, and secret places, were turned out'; men 'breaking open all locked doors for lack of keys', making a bonfire outside of 'papistical images and books', and leaving the house a wreck.[1]

In 1589 Thomas Belson of Brill, and his servant, Humphrey Pritchard, were both hanged at Oxford for helping a priest, George Nichols, who was hanged with them.

The Pope and the English Catholics hoped much from the accession of James I, who, in advance of his age, was in favour of toleration, and began to negotiate a most unpopular peace with Spain. But the old round of plots on the one side, and executions on the other, began again before the first year of his reign was out, and in 1605 the old Recusancy Acts were enforced and the Catholics heavily fined. The Puritan party, on the other hand, thought that the king had not gone far enough. There was great indignation in the county when Father Roger Lee converted Mary Moulsoe, the heiress of Gayhurst, and her husband, Sir Everard Digby. Their fine house became a centre of Catholic intrigue; Nicholas Owen, a Jesuit, skilled in devising hiding-places, made for the Digbys a movable floor, revolving on a pivot; this being unbolted revealed a room below with secret ways in and out of it; and clever cabinets and drawers in which papers might be concealed. The famous priest, Father Gerard, was Digby's great friend.

In the autumn of 1605 there was a Roman Catholic pilgrimage, to St. Winifred's well at Holywell, which began and ended at Gayhurst; several members of the Digby family took part in it; and Guy Fawkes stayed at Gay-

hurst. Sir Everard Digby, who had at first disapproved of the Gunpowder Plot, yielded to the fascination of its promoters, and threw himself headlong into it; he was only five-and-twenty, and an enthusiastic convert. A country house was hired for him on the borders of Worcestershire, and he was to hold a great hunting match on the day of the meeting of Parliament, the 5th of November. As soon as news should be received that the king and the parliament had been blown up, Digby, with some members of the Hunt, were to seize the Princess Elizabeth, who was at Combe Abbey, within an easy ride.

Tresham, one of the conspirators, betrayed the secret to his brother-in-law, Lord Monteagle, whose life he wished to save. When the news reached Sir Everard of the complete failure of the plot, he rode desperately for his life, but was captured, imprisoned in the Tower, tried in Westminster Hall, dragged on a hurdle to St. Paul's, and there, on January 30, 1606, he was hanged, and his body treated 'with the usual ghastly barbarities'. On the scaffold, like the gallant youth that he was, 'he confessed his guilt, with a manly shame for his infatuation', and exonerated Father Gerard of any share in the Gunpowder Plot. It had not yet dawned upon the pious on either side that 'men must agree to worship separately in peace, if they cannot agree to worship peacefully together.' The young widow, Lady Digby, retained her property, and brought up her two boys at Gayhurst; but the house was, not unnaturally, viewed with suspicion. The eldest, Sir Kenelm, who was but three years old when he lost his father, grew up very handsome and accomplished; he and his beautiful wife, Venetia Stanley, were great favourites at Court, and were painted by Vandyck. The younger son, Sir John Digby, was killed at the battle of Langport in 1645. There was an alarming report in later years, which spread far and wide in Bucks, started by a molecatcher's boy, who had heard it from an ostler, that Sir Kenelm had sent his mother great store of arms for a Papist rising, and that 'men should go over their shoe-tops in blood'. Lady Digby exposed the story by asking for a full inquiry, but it proves the strong local impression left by the Gunpowder Plot. The 5th of November was 'remembered' for years with special gusto at High

Wycombe; the four wards had rival bonfires, and skirmishes with fireworks, after which the mayor and aldermen sat down to 'cold spareribs and apple-sauce', and drank loyal toasts from a loving cup of spiced ale.

Gayhurst was sold in the next century, by two Digby heiresses, to Sir Nathan Wrighte, Lord Keeper to Queen Anne, whose monument by Roubillac is in the church. Mr. W. W. Carlile, who was M.P. for North Bucks from 1895 to 1905, now owns the house. The memory of the old possessor is still preserved in Digby's Walk, and by some humble creatures peculiar to the place. White, edible snails, tinged with red, are said to abound in the Gayhurst woods, descendants of those Sir Kenelm brought from the South of France, for his wife, Venetia, who was consumptive.[2] They are not appreciated by Bucks invalids, but a Pectoral Paste of Snails is often to be seen in French chemists' windows to the present day.

From political conflicts and religious persecution we turn with relief to the best legacy which King James has left us, the Authorized Version of the English Bible of 1611. The celebration of the Tercentenary of its publication, both in England and in America, has reminded us afresh of its history, and of the credit due to the king for its initiation. At a meeting at New York, held in April, 1911, a letter was read from King George V which is of great historical interest, speaking as he does in the name of England and as a direct descendant of King James: 'I rejoice that America and England should join in commemorating the publication, 300 years ago, of that version of the Holy Scriptures, which has so long held its own among English-speaking peoples. Its circulation in our homes has done, perhaps, more than anything else on earth, to promote among old and young, moral and religious welfare, on either side of the Atlantic. The version which bears King James's name is so clearly interwoven in the history of British and American life that it is right we should thank God for it together. I congratulate the President and the people of the United States upon their share in this our common heritage.'

On the same occasion, our ambassador, Mr. James Bryce, reminded us that this great translation 'was,

like most great things, no sudden achievement of a group of gifted scholars, but the mature fruit of desires and purposes which had long been ripening in the minds of our ancestors'.

Indeed we may be said to have gained this treasure by a happy accident. The conference called at Hampton Court Palace in 1604 met to consider the complaints of the Presbyterians against the Prayer Book, one of which was that the extracts from the Bible were mistranslated. Dr. Reynolds, their leader, proposed that an altogether new translation should be undertaken. This was received unfavourably by churchmen, who had so lately been given the Bishops' Bible of 1568, but it laid hold of the king's imagination; 'James was a born theologian, from his childhood he had been devoted to the study of the Bible, he had written a paraphrase of Revelation, and translated some of the Psalms. He well knew that Greek and Hebrew Scholarship had made great progress in the preceding thirty or forty years.'[3] 'The notion of directing in his own royal person a great national enterprise, such as the production of a translation, surpassing all its predecessors in fidelity and literary excellence, was as gratifying to his self-confidence and his vanity as it was congenial to his tastes.'[3]

In this labour our county was honourably represented. When the company of forty-seven revisers began their work, the Prophets were entrusted to seven Oxford men, among whom was 'Brett, of a worshipful family'. Richard Brett (1567–1637) was known as the learned Rector of Quainton; to which living he had been appointed in 1595. He was famous for special knowledge of the biblical languages and of other Eastern tongues. His daughter Elizabeth married William Sparke, who succeeded his father as Rector of Bletchley (where he was born), and was a member of the Hampton Court Conference.

In the fine parish church of Quainton, so rich in brasses and sculpture, there is an interesting monument of the old translator. He and his wife, Alice, daughter of Richard Brown, sometime Mayor of Oxford, in full, close ruffs, and long lines of graceful drapery, kneel on each side of an ark-shaped box or desk, with smaller figures of their six sons and four daughters; the background is a room in perspec-

tive with two large open books on the wall, and pictures or framed needlework.

[In a large box in the south aisle, of the same shape as the one on the monument, lie the mutilated remains of the fine folio of the Authorized Version of the Bible, presented by Brett to his church. It has been roughly handled by men and eaten by mice, but should not be beyond repair and loving restoration. Inscriptions in Hebrew, Greek and Latin on the wall commemorate in faultless syntax the old rector's private and public virtues, and at the last there is a bit of comfortable English doggerel which his wife probably felt brought her nearer to the man with whom she had spent thirty happy years than all the learned classical phrases.

'Instead of weeping marble, weepe for him,
All ye his flock, whom he did strive to winn
To Christ, to Lyfe, so shall you duly sett
The most desiréd stone on Doctor Brett.'

It was the time for elaborately ingenious epitaphs. Francis Quarles, one of the most popular of Puritan poets, whose book of emblems was in every religious household, wrote some of his most famous memorial lines for the beautiful monument in Hambleden Church to Sir Cope D'Oyley, his wife (the poet's sister), and their children; the description of the lady ends thus—

'In spirit a Jael,
Rebecca in grace, in heart an Abigail;
In works a Dorcas, to the Church a Hannah,
And to her spouse Susannah,
Prudently simple, providently wary;
To the world a Martha, and to heaven a Mary.'

[1] Victoria County History, *Bucks.*
[2] Murray, *Handbook to Bucks.*
[3] Hoare, *Our English Bible.*

CHAPTER X

SIR FRANCIS AND SIR EDMUND VERNEY, 1584–1642

THE lives of two half-brothers, both landowners and well-known characters in Bucks, help us to understand the silent changes of outlook in English society from the reign of Elizabeth to that of Charles I.

Mr. J. R. Green, who has given us our best picture of Puritan England, thus defines the difference: 'There was a sudden loss of the passion, the caprice, the subtle and tender play of feeling, the breadth of sympathy, the quick pulse of delight which had marked the age of Elizabeth; but on the other hand life gained in moral grandeur, in a sense of the dignity of manhood, in orderliness, and equable force. Home, as we conceive it now, was the creation of the Puritan. . . . A higher conception of duty coloured men's daily actions . . . the wilfulness of life, in which the men of the Renaissance had revelled, seemed unworthy of life's character and end.'[1] The elder brother in our story, Sir Francis Verney, showed all this wilfulness of life, and impatience of restraint. He belonged to the adventurous band of the great sea-rovers, who at the best were like Sir Walter Raleigh, and at the worst became mere swashbucklers and pirates. To these men the long war with Spain had opened a career of chivalrous adventure, such as the Crusades had given their ancestors; and they were undone when King James proclaimed his unpopular treaty of peace.

The younger brother, Sir Edmund Verney, with the same courage and knightly tradition, was burdened with deeper problems; and could no longer draw his sword light-heartedly to cut through the tangled problems in Church and State that beset an English gentleman of the seventeenth century.

Sir Francis Verney, born 1584, was the eldest son of Sir Edmund Verney of Claydon. Educated at Trinity College, Oxford, he made a journey to the Holy Land, was entertained on his return by the English ambassador at

Paris; fought some famous duels, and was held to be one of the handsomest, best dressed, and most gallant gentlemen of his day.

He had inherited his father's property in Herts, and the manor and advowson of Quainton, where his ancestress, Margaret Iwardby, Lady Verney, has a brass in the church.

Sir Francis had no liking for the homespun duties of a country squire; a marriage had been arranged for him in childhood by his masterful stepmother, with her daughter, Ursula St. Barbe. His dislike of 'ould Lady Verney' extended to his wife, and after an unsuccessful attempt to upset a settlement which gave the Claydon estates to his younger brother, he sold his Quainton property and resolved to 'forsake the friends who had injured him, and the country which had refused him redress'.[2]

As the war with Spain, lately so glorious, had become unlawful, Sir Francis joined with the Giffards (another well-known Bucks family) in more or less piratical expeditions, in which even English ships were sometimes plundered. He also took part in a civil war in Morocco, where a reckless band of young Englishmen lent their swords to the emperor, who was fighting a 'pretender', as the emperors of Morocco have been doing ever since.

By land and sea Sir Francis and his friends defied all virtuous efforts of King James to put them down. There is a legend that he was taken prisoner, and made to serve as a galley-slave, and died in great poverty and misery, having 'turned Turk'. The facts were sad enough: he caught a fever in Sicily, and was nursed by the brothers of the great Hospital of St. Mary of Pity at Messina, where he died in 1615, aged thirty-one. But the rich silk pelisses, slippers, and turban sent home by an English merchant, and still kept at Claydon House, contradict the report of his poverty, as his staff inlaid with crosses in mother-of-pearl disproves the improbable story of his apostasy.

It was amongst such brave and restless spirits that 'Rupert's Horse' was to be recruited in the succeeding reign.

Sir Edmund Verney, born in 1590, early lost his father, but he was brought up by his mother in all knightly exercises that might fit him for the camp and the court, in the love of outdoor sports, of art and music, and in the paths

of domestic virtue and personal piety. As a youth he served with the army in the Low Countries, and visited the Courts of France, Italy, and Spain.

In 1610 he was appointed to the household of Henry, Prince of Wales, in which Sir Thomas Chaloner of Steeple Claydon held the important post of tutor and chamberlain. Chaloner's sons, both M.P.s, were in later years to be among the Regicides, alienated, like Sir Edmund's son, by Charles's policy—but in those days Chaloners and Verneys were enthusiastically devoted to the Stuarts, and to the end of his life Sir Edmund spoke of Prince Henry's early death as the greatest sorrow he had ever known.

In 1612 Sir Edmund married Margaret Denton of Hillesdon, who made him very happy, and brought him twelve children. The next year he was appointed to the household of Charles, Prince of Wales, who was ten years his junior, and with whom he lived henceforth on terms of close intimacy, not even disturbed by Charles's inveterate habit of borrowing large sums of money from his friends.

Sir Edmund's share in the mad journey to Spain in search of the Infanta scarcely concerns us; on his return he took an active part in county business. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the splendid court favourite, made him his lieutenant in charge of Whaddon Chase, a great tract of forest and moorland stretching then from Winslow to Bletchley, with leave to kill what game he would, and to reside in the Manor-House. The forest-laws, which the tillers of the soil had protested against ever since the Norman Conquest, were still obnoxious. The cottagers of Little Horwood (none of whom could sign their names) petitioned Sir Edmund to intercede for them with the great duke, and certified 'that the deer did much oppress them, lying down in their corn and grass', also that 'their ancient rights to cut and fetch furzes from off the common land was now forbidden them'. There was much poverty and sickness, small-pox was rife, and there were outbreaks at intervals of the plague, brought down from the cities; it was part of the duty of a country gentleman to arrange for those on his estate afflicted with scurvy to be brought to town to be touched for 'the King's Evil'.

In 1624, Sir Edmund Verney was returned to Parliament,

Vandyck pinx.

SIR EDMUND VERNEY, KT., KNIGHT-MARSHAL AND STANDARD-BEARER

From a picture at Claydon House

and continued to represent Buckingham, Aylesbury, or Wycombe for the greater part of his life. When Charles became king, he made his faithful servant Knight-Marshal of the Palace, which involved a general supervision of the royal household, officers, and tradesmen, the regulation of markets held at the palace gates, and the maintenance of the Marshalsea Prison for the detention of prisoners. The Knight-Marshal had to pay the warders, and to recoup himself precariously by fees extorted from the prisoners.

Sir Edmund was constantly riding up and down between London and Bucks; as Deputy Lieutenant he had many unpleasant duties to perform, such as disarming the Roman Catholics and the constant levying of subsidies of doubtful legality. He was obliged to leave his large family chiefly to Dame Margaret's care, as his attendance in the House of Commons became more and more vital, but he kept up the most tender relations with his children and children's children, who were all accustomed to meet at Claydon.

A letter of his has been preserved, written at one o'clock in the morning, when a little granddaughter was grievously ill, to announce to his son in London, that his 'sweet child was going apace to a better world'.[2] One cannot imagine Sir Francis Verney watching beside a dying child, any more than one can think of Sir Edmund as a buccaneer, and 'shouting with the shouting crew'.

On religious and political grounds, Sir Edmund was opposed to the policy of Laud and Strafford; he subscribed to bring Archbishop Ussher from Ireland to preach at Paul's Cross, and received him in his house; he allied himself with Hyde and Falkland against the politics of the court and the queen.

The Bucks members were notable men. Sir Miles Hobart, M.P. for Marlow, suffered imprisonment in the Tower for his freedom of speech; Sir Peter Temple was shut up in his own house at Stowe for arrears of ship-money which he refused to pay; Sir Edward Coke, of Stoke Poges, M.P. for the county, was the legal adviser of the constitutional party; Whitelock, Goodwin, and Bulstrode, and younger men like John Hampden, were making their mark.

Then the war with the Scots began in 1639; Sir Edmund was at Claydon tormented with sciatica, and still more

troubled in mind at the king's policy; but he prepared at once to meet him at York, looked to his armour, summoned his men, and made his will. He was anxious that, wherever he fell, he should be buried in the church of Middle Claydon, a provision which his eldest son and his faithful steward, Roades, willingly undertook to carry out.

His letters were disquieting to those who loved and watched for him. 'Our Army,' he wrote, 'is but weak, our Purse is weaker, if we fight with these forces we shall have our throats cut, and to delay fighting we cannot for want of money to keep our Army together.'

An inconclusive peace was made in the field, and the fight renewed in Parliament. In the midst of the tense excitement of Strafford's trial, Dame Margaret died in London, and her husband and son could scarcely get leave of absence for her hurried funeral at Claydon.

When the Civil War broke out at last, King Charles called upon his old friend to be his standard-bearer. During the anxious weeks preceding, Sir Edmund had privately confessed to Hyde that he did not like the quarrel, and heartily wished the king would yield to what his people desired—'so that my conscience [he said] is only concerned in honour and gratitude to follow my master. I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him, and choose rather to lose my life (which I am sure I shall do) to preserve and defend those things which are against my conscience to preserve and defend.'[3]

But the time for scruples had gone by; Sir Edmund had been given what every soldier covets, the post of honour and danger, and he said as he accepted the charge, 'That by the grace of God (his word always) they that would wrest that standard from his hand must first wrest his soul from his body.'

On August 22, 1642, the royal standard was raised at Nottingham, with trumpets blowing and all the pomp and panoply of war. But the country was slow to respond, and the standard itself was blown down by an unruly wind, nor 'could it be fixed again in a day or two till the tempest was allayed'. Men were depressed by this ill omen, but Sir Edmund was no fair-weather friend.

On October 23 the first battle of the great Civil War was fought at Edgehill. Sir Edmund, who always felt the weight of his helmet, went bareheaded into the field. The struggle round the standard was 'furious in the extreme; Sir Edmund adventured with it among the enemy that the soldiers might follow him. He was offered his life by a throng of his enemies if he would deliver it up; he answered his life was his own, but the standard was his and their sovereign's, that he would not deliver it up with his life, and he hoped it would be rescued when he was dead.'[2] Sixteen gentlemen fell that day by his sword, till according to tradition his left hand was cut off, still faithfully grasping the staff of the standard. On one of the fingers was the ring with the king's portrait, given him by his master. The standard was recovered by Captain Smith, a Catholic officer of the King's Life-Guards, who may also have found and saved Sir Edmund's ring.

The most diligent search, by orders of his devoted son, failed to discover his body. Sir Ralph had this poignant addition to his grief, that the affectionate relations of a lifetime had been strained and difficult at the last. Sharing his father's political convictions without his personal obligations, he adhered to the Parliament.

The news of the battle spread consternation: the old pathetic words, 'They shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth,' seemed to describe the state of Claydon. Sir Edmund Verney had left home in his usual health, and his children and servants had watched the cavalcade starting cheerfully out of the old courtyard.

There had been no funeral, no tangible proof of his death; ghost stories were rife, and for generations it was believed that Sir Edmund's ghost, seeking its hand, haunted both the battlefield and his old house, with the surrounding spinneys.

There is a strange allusion to Edgehill in the parish register of Little Brickhill, stating that a woman, Agnes Potter, of Dunstable, wounded in the battle, died there on her way home, November 30, 1642.[4]

[1] J. R. Green, *History of the English People.*
[2] Clarendon, *History of the Great Rebellion.*
[3] *Verney Memoirs.*
[4] Cox, *History of Parish Registers.*

CHAPTER XI

JOHN HAMPDEN, 1549–1643

If one name stands pre-eminently for Bucks it is that of the statesman and soldier John Hampden, perhaps the most honoured memory left by the Civil War. Gray's epithet of a 'village Hampden' is one which every boy should long to earn. A 'village Hampden' would be simple, brave, and modest, the terror of the bully, the champion of the weak, steadfast in the right cause at any personal cost; doing, and if need be suffering, in the village life what Hampden did and suffered for England.

John Hampden, born 1594, was the eldest son of William Hampden of Great Hampden, who had considerable estates in the county, and died when his son was only three years old, in 1597. William Hampden was mainly occupied with country pursuits; in his will 'his horses are carefully described and generally bequeathed by name'. He had owned the estate for six years only, after the death of his father, Griffith Hampden, in 1591, and had not had time to take as much share in public life as either his father or his son. His beautiful estate had belonged to the Hampden family from the time of the earliest authentic records, and it was one of the conditions of tenure that the Hampdens should maintain the ancient Whiteleaf Cross which stretches its hundred feet of whiteness, cut out of the green slope of the Chilterns. The present representative of the Hampdens, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, was the first chairman of our County Education Committee. Hampden House stands high amongst the fine beech-woods bordering the Chilterns, and was noted for its springs of pure water, and for the fine ale brewed in the old mansion. King John had been a guest in the house; later on the Hampdens fought for the Red Rose, and bore their share in making the history of the county and the kingdom.

Queen Elizabeth's visit has been already mentioned. James I stayed with the Hampdens while John was a little boy; it was a wonderful home to grow up in, with all its associations. Hampden's mother, Elizabeth Crom-

well, was a remarkable woman ; she was the aunt of Oliver Cromwell, and lived through the reigns of six sovereigns ; she saw the estates of the realm turned upside down, the king brought to the scaffold, and her own family exalted to the highest place and power. But in spite of her great name and her great nephew, a Royalist she was bred and a Royalist she remained to the end of her long life of ninety years ; she was buried at Great Hampden in 1664.

Her eldest son, John, seems to have inherited the best traditions of the Hampdens and Cromwells. He had the Puritan ideals of duty, self-restraint, and hard work, with their love and knowledge of the Bible, together with the wider culture, the refinement and charm of manner which distinguished the noblest of the Cavaliers. The boy was educated at Lord Williams's School at Thame, in the old buildings at the entrance of the long street. It is pleasant to think that Bucks boys, in that part of the county, still cross the border as he did to the excellent Thame Grammar School. Hampden loved books, and was a diligent scholar both at school and college. In spite of the influence of Laud, a few Oxford colleges 'retained their Puritan character ; in the cloisters and river walks of Magdalen, Hampden and his Buckinghamshire neighbours imbibed those principles which they afterwards maintained in arms, when they held the Chiltern Hills as the outworks of London against the Oxford Cavaliers '.[1] He had a good knowledge of law, but history was his favourite study. He carried about with him a *History of the Civil Wars in France*, a well-worn and much-read volume, little thinking that the same troubles were to befall his own country, and that he was to play so leading a part in them. He was called to the Bar and lived for a time in London, but on his marriage with Elizabeth Symeon of Pyrton, when he was twenty-five, he settled at Great Hampden. He sat as member for Wendover in the Parliaments of 1625 to 1628, and it was largely owing to his efforts that this ancient borough regained its right to a representative. During the early years of Charles I he resisted the king's illegal acts both in and out of Parliament, and for his opposition to a forced loan of money he was kept a close prisoner in the gate-house at Westminster and elsewhere,

to the serious injury of his health. Hampden's chief friends in the House of Commons were his neighbour, Sir Miles Hobart, and Sir John Eliot, both noble and fearless men, who suffered greatly for their resistance to the Crown; Eliot finally died from his long and rigorous imprisonment in the Tower, where he was denied even the solace of an open window. Hampden cheered him with constant letters, and undertook the care and education of his children. Sir Miles Hobart, who on a famous occasion had locked the door of the House and put the key in his pocket while the king's messenger was knocking for admittance, was released from the Tower, but died shortly afterwards by an accident in 1632. His monument in the church at Marlow shows him as a good-looking man in a ruff and slashed doublet, with long hair and nothing of the Puritan in his aspect. A bas-relief represents 'his four-horse coach running away down Holborn hill. The off-hind wheel is broken, the coachman gone, the horses galloping under no control. There are several interesting details, the wheelers' traces are hitched to the axles of the front wheels'.[3]

During the eleven years that followed the dissolution of Parliament in 1628, Hampden retired to his home, where he passed some happy years as an active magistrate and landowner, devoted to his wife and children, his books, and outdoor sports; but he was not to be quiet long. In 1634 he had the bitter sorrow of his wife's death, and in 1635 began Hampden's resistance to the illegal levy of ship-money which has made his name so famous. 'Public affairs grew darker and darker; the promises of the king were violated without scruple or shame,' and he made one more attempt to raise money without calling a Parliament. In 1636 Hampden chose to resist the payment of twenty shillings assessed on his land in the parish of Stoke Mandeville. Burke quoted his action more than 100 years later, when the Americans were also resisting unjust taxation. 'Would twenty shillings,' he said, 'have ruined Mr. Hampden's fortune? No, but the payment of half twenty shillings on the principle it was demanded would have made him a slave.'

This famous trial roused the interest of the whole country,

twelve judges delivered their opinions; Hampden had the support of Sir George Croke of Chilton, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, known as the Patriot Judge; finally the decision was in favour of the crown, the raising of ship-money was declared lawful; but the defeat immensely increased Hampden's popularity, as the judges' reasons 'left no man anything he could call his own'.

In the Short and the Long Parliaments Hampden was member for the county—'there they sat, courtier and Puritan, the pick and choice of the gentlemen of England, by birth, by wealth, by talents the first assembly of the world.' There is a sheet of paper still preserved at Claydon House on which are the names of the Bucks members 'fair writ for sport',[2] among them Hampden's firm round hand is conspicuous; he soon became their leader. He is described at this time as 'a powerfully built man, with an abundance of crisp wavy hair falling almost to his shoulders, but brushed away from the forehead so that it did not conceal the height and breadth of a very striking brow. The features were good, the upper lip very short, the mouth firm but sweet, the jaw square and massive, the eyes singularly thoughtful'. Hampden was a silent rather than an eloquent member, but he followed the business with the closest attention, and the few words he sometimes contributed to the end of a debate always carried weight. He was diligent in the work of the committees, and became an authority on the procedure of the House. No report of the debates was then allowed to be published, but Hampden's friend and neighbour, Sir Ralph Verney, a careful, methodical man, would bring in small folded sheets of paper and a pencil, to make notes for his own information, which have since become of great historical interest.

On January 4, 1642, a private message was received at the House from the Earl of Essex that the king was coming down to arrest five members, of whom Hampden was one, and advising them to withdraw, which they did forthwith. 'As Charles stepped through the door which none of his predecessors had ever passed, he was, little as he thought it, formally acknowledging that power had passed into new hands.' Sir Ralph Verney, diligently

scribbling on his knee, recorded the Speaker's loyalty and the sovereign's discomfiture. The news caused an outburst of indignation in the county, 4,000 Bucks gentlemen and freeholders rode up to London to support and vindicate their member. War was becoming inevitable, and Hampden consulted with his cousin Cromwell how a force could be raised to defend the liberties of the realm, of 'such men as had the fear of God before them'. He undertook to raise and train a regiment of foot, and Colonel Hampden's 'Green-Coats', with their motto 'There is no turning back', became one of the best regiments in the Parliament's service.

When war had broken out Hampden urged decisive action. In June 1643 the Parliamentary forces were scattered between Thame and Oxford, Prince Rupert saw his advantage and led a vigorous attack. On the 18th Hampden was wounded in a skirmish at Chalgrove Field. In mortal pain and in the bitterness of defeat he was seen 'to ride off the field before the action was done, which he never used to do, with his head hanging down, and resting his hands on the neck of his horse'.

There is a story that he looked towards the house at Pyrton whence he had brought his bride Elizabeth, and would have gone there to die, but the enemy lay in that direction; he turned his horse towards Thame, where he arrived 'almost fainting with agony'. He lingered on for six days, in terrible suffering borne with the greatest courage; he wrote letters from his bed on public affairs of which his thoughts were full; received the Sacrament with great devoutness, and then he died.

The broad street of Thame down which Hampden had so often run as a schoolboy was filled with his Green-Coats, and thence a long, sad procession of his own people singing the 90th Psalm bore their soldier and patriot home. The coffin was taken through the banqueting hall of the old house into the brick parlour he had specially made his own. Later, with arms reversed the soldiers carried him across the lawn to the parish church, and 'laid the body of John Hampden beside the tombs of his forefathers in the chancel, near the touchingly worded memorial he had dedicated to his first wife'. The county, the army, and

the Parliament deeply mourned his loss; 'a man,' they said, 'so religious, and of that prudence, judgement, temper, valour and integrity that he hath left few his like behind.' To the county he has bequeathed his name, to 'village Hampdens' his example.

[1] *Dict. Nat. Biog.* [2] *Verney Memoirs.* [3] *Records of Bucks.*

CHAPTER XII

THE DENTONS OF HILLESDEN

THE Dentons of Hillesden were a family of Cavaliers, who suffered much for their loyalty to King Charles. The estate had been given by Edward VI to Thomas Denton, Treasurer of the Temple, M.P. for Bucks in 1554.[1] His only son Alexander, a very handsome youth, married an heiress in Herefordshire. When she died, at eighteen, with her first baby, Sir Alexander was broken-hearted; life seemed over for him at twenty-three, and he put up a fine altar tomb with figures of himself, his wife Anne, and the little swaddled baby in Hereford Cathedral. Some years later, to the great joy of his parents, he married again Mary Martin, daughter of a Lord Mayor of London, and had a son Thomas. Dying at the age of thirty-one he was buried at Hillesden in 1574, and his family put up another memorial there, so Sir Alexander has monuments in two different counties, while Anne and her babe lie alone together.

The son Thomas was an important country gentleman, a magistrate and an M.P., allied with his neighbours the Temples of Stowe, and the Verneys of Claydon. He left twelve children. His eldest son and successor, Sir Alexander, married Mary Hampden before the troubles began, and no family suffered more from divided affections and interests during the Civil War.

Sir Alexander's eldest son John was a colonel in the Royal

army; his brother-in-law, Sir Edmund Verney, had just laid down his life for the king; his nephew and dearest friend, Sir Ralph Verney, took the Parliament side, and John Hampden, his wife's famous cousin, was 'their foremost man in the House of Commons and in the field'. Sir Alexander was a gentle, affectionate man, loving his home and his children, who would gladly have kept out of all strife, but his sympathies were well known.

In August 1642, just after the king's standard had been raised at Nottingham, Nehemiah Wharton, a Parliamentary soldier, marching towards Buckingham, boasted that he had shot a deer in the park of 'that malignant fellow', Sir Alexander Denton, and feasted the troop to their great content.

Hillesden House stood on a ridge close to a beautiful Henry VII church, a few miles from Buckingham, between Oxford, where the king lay, and Newport Pagnell, garrisoned by Colonel Luke for the Parliament. Colonel Smith, a native of Buckingham, took command of the place for the king in 1644, 1,000 labourers worked to dig trenches and throw up a mound for such small guns as they were able to spare from Oxford; and the country people made a cannon out of one of the big elm trees and hooped it round with iron. The house was full of women and girls, Sir Alexander's sisters and daughters and nieces, besides the village people who came crowding in, with less than 300 soldiers to defend them.

Oliver Cromwell marched from Aylesbury with a large force, sleeping the night at the Camp Barn at Steeple Claydon. The garrison, surprised, could make no real defence, the church was carried, and then the house. Sir Alexander lost everything, even his money, which was kept behind a panel, and under the lead roof; and the house was burnt to the ground. Cromwell went on to Buckingham; the master of Hillesden, beggared, broken-hearted and a prisoner, was marched off to Padbury, where he spent a night of great discomfort, and then to Newport Pagnell. The Muster Rolls, lately recovered, show that at this very time, John Bunyan, aged sixteen or seventeen, was a soldier of the garrison there. The knowledge that he gained of the coming and going of troops and prisoners,

and of the walls, gates and sally-port of Newport Pagnell, were reproduced in after years in his *Holy War*. Some twelve years later his first book was sold at Newport by Matthias Cowley, bookseller.

Cromwell's soldiers were under stern discipline and were much less feared in Bucks than Rupert's troopers. The women and children were escorted across the fields to Claydon, weeping as they went, but they were not molested ; indeed, the tragedy ends with an exchange of courtesies and two love stories. When Colonel Smith surrendered, a Puritan soldier rudely knocked off his hat, he complained to General Cromwell, who assured him the man should be punished, and taking a new beaver from off his own head, he begged Smith to accept of it in the meantime.

Captain Jeremiah Abercrombie (the Puritans loved Old Testament names), one of the attacking force, wooed and won on the march Susan Denton, Sir Alexander's sister. It was a strange introduction that the lover had helped to sack and burn his mistress's home. But in such troubled times a timid maiden lady, no longer very young, might well be glad of the protection of a husband, so the wedding took place at once, and they went off to Addington, where Captain Abercrombie had been quartered for several months in the old manor house, restored and added to a few years later, by Robert Busby the lawyer, whose family tombs are in Addington Church.

Abercrombie was well known in these parts. He had been sent from the army at Newport Pagnell to get news and provisions in Winslow and the neighbourhood. He wrote to the Earl of Essex that he had found a party of Cavaliers in Winslow intent on the same business. ' Some 10 men within the town, drinking, dancing, and sinking themselves, and some 44 with their colours at the town's end. I advanced towards them and they made no great haste, but at last I advanced with a full body upon them, they took heels and I followed, and they ran the hay way to Padbury Bridge. I confess they beat us at running, if it had been for £1,000, and ran into their den, which was Sir Alexander Denton's house.' (Each side accused the other of coming ' to rob the poor inhabitants '.) ' Here I shall remain in this house till I know your Excellency's

pleasure, and shall ever remain your Excellency's at command, to sacrifice his blood.'

It was no empty boast ; a few months after his marriage Captain Jeremiah was killed in a skirmish ' with a party from Boarstall ' ; his widow was left with a turbulent baby Jeremiah, who was the plague and the pride of her old age.

Meanwhile Sir Alexander Denton had been brought up to the Tower where his daughter Margaret was allowed to wait upon him. Colonel Smith, the defender of Hillesden was also confined there, and managed a difficult courtship of his fellow prisoner Margaret Denton. This marriage brought a ray of comfort to Sir Alexander, who had to bear another overwhelming sorrow ; his son John, wounded at Hillesden, had no sooner recovered, than he was killed at Abingdon in command of a Royalist force. He received thirty wounds at the last, ' that good young man whose very enemies lament him.' [1]

On the winning side there was an order made that in all the parish churches should be read ' A catalogue of remarkable mercies, conferred on the midland counties by the recent victories, including the taking of Hillesden House—which victory enabled the Parliament to ease and comfort the poor inhabitants of the almost wasted county of Buckingham '.

Sir Alexander Denton died of a fever on New Year's Day, 1645, aged 48, just as his friends were expecting to accomplish his release.

Hillesden House was rebuilt, and a later Alexander Denton (1679–1740) was recorder and three times M.P. for Buckingham, till he became a judge, and in 1729 he was made chancellor to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II. He married an heiress, Catherine Bond, and was so much beloved at Hillesden for his probity and bounty ' that it was said that the best thing belonging to the place was its Master '.[2] He was brought up at the Free School at Buckingham, which Isabel Denton had endowed, and showed his gratitude to the head master, Robert Styles, by giving him the living of Preston Bissett. He died childless, and his nephew, George Chamberlayne, succeeded him as M.P. for Buckingham, and became his heir.

In the eighteenth century the owner of Stowe bought and

pulled down the mansion, a loss which the parish has never recovered, and the old church, with the bullet-holes in its door, stands amid a few cottages, the vicarage and the school, in the silence of green fields, with its fine avenue of elm trees, and its proud memories of old heroism.

[1] *Verney Memoirs.* [2] Gough MSS.

CHAPTER XIII

SIR JOHN DENHAM AND THE SIEGES OF BOARSTALL HOUSE

The history of Boarstall has been intimately connected with that of the great forest of Bernwood ; the story of the original boar has been already told.

In the reign of Edward III a court was held at Brill, at which poachers who had killed the king's deer were severely punished, and declared to be common malefactors ; at the same time the rights of the men of Brill, Boarstall, and Oakley to pasture their cattle in the forest, excepting only during the month that the fawns were born, was reasserted. Besides the deer, the king's hogs were privileged creatures in the forest, and had their duly appointed guardians, who eventually rose, in name at least, above their fellows ; while shepherd, cowherd, and woodman remained among the workers, the stye-ward rose to be steward, and at last to be a Stuart and a king. In the time of James I a commission was sent to cut the trees down, and to the freeholders whose cattle had ranged through the forest, small grants of land were made as compensation, partly from the crown lands, partly from those belonging to Sir John Denham.

This Sir John Denham, a judge, had land in Surrey and Essex, as well as in Bucks, and held high judicial appointments in Ireland. He was steward of Eton College and acted as their counsel. He was sheriff for Bucks in 1622,

He with other judges had pronounced that Charles I could legally levy the ship-money ; and he was one of the judges before whom his neighbour John Hampden's case was tried. Sir John Denham was very ill of an ague, but he exerted himself to write an opinion in favour of Hampden, and then he died. He was succeeded by his son, Sir John Denham, in 1639, who was quite a famous poet in his day, 'a slow, dreaming young man,' he was called at Oxford, 'more addicted to gambling than to study.'

When the Civil War broke out he was living in Surrey, and was made governor of Farnham Castle. He was there besieged and made prisoner, and had all sorts of ups and downs of fortune. While Denham was fighting for the king, a rival poet, George Wither, was a captain in the Parliament's army, and was pouring forth songs and broadsheets in defence of his own side. They were bitterly opposed to each other. A jest of Sir John Denham's has come down to us. When Wither was taken prisoner by the Royalists, Denham begged Charles I to pardon him, 'For,' he said, 'while Wither lives, I shall not be the worst poet in England.'

Whilst Denham was busy fighting, intriguing, and writing poetry in the south, his fine house in Bucks was being fortified for the king, and held as an outpost of the forces at Oxford. The command of Boarstall was given in 1644 to Sir William Campion. Letters are still extant written by the king to this gallant young soldier. He had no sooner taken up the command of the garrison, than he was told to send his two brass guns to Oxford, as the king's army sorely needed them, and had no brass to cast more. He was next ordered to pull down the church, built in the early fifteenth century, and to send the bells to Oxford to be melted down ; to remove any cottages that might interfere with the defence of the tower, and to cut down the trees to make 'palisadoes'. He was to take every cart away from the farmers, and to use them for thirty days in strengthening the fortifications.

A little later the king needs great store of tow, hemp, and flax to make 'match' for the cannon, and Campion is to search all the country round Boarstall, which is said to yield considerable supplies of these commodities.[1] He is

congratulated in March at the success he has had over 'the rebels', but a little later, he was ordered to withdraw his men to Oxford, and abandon the place. This was soon found to be a mistake; Boarstall was then garrisoned for the Parliament from Aylesbury; their forces were so active in harassing the Royalists, and in levying contributions upon all the country round, that the king's men resolved to re-take it. Lady Denham during this interval seems to have lived again in her house by leave of the enemy; there is an unexplained sentence that when the attack began, 'Lady Denham, conscious of her disloyalty, stole away in disguise.' This siege has given Boarstall an honourable mention in Clarendon's *History*. Colonel Gage, who was held in great esteem, 'offered to undertake the reducing it, with a party of commanded men of the Foot, 3 pieces of Cannon, and a troop of Horse, who by the break of day, appeared before the place, and in a short time got possession of the Church and the Out-houses, and then battered the house itself with his Cannon, which they within would not long endure, but desired a Parley. Upon which the House was rendered with the Ammunition and much good provision of Victual, and had liberty given them to go away with their arms and horses.'

Whereupon the unfortunate country people were pillaged once more by Colonel Gage's soldiers 'besides the Prey that they frequently took from the very neighbourhood of Aylesbury'. Sir William Campion was again installed as governor, and Lady Campion came and lived there. Some skirmishing took place round Boarstall in the spring of 1645, and General Skippon had designs on the place, which was more seriously attacked by Fairfax in June. The challenge and the reply show the courtesies and etiquette of seventeenth-century warfare, between two gallant gentlemen.

'Sir Thomas Fairfax to Sir William Campion.

'Sir,—I send you this summons before I proceed to extremities to deliver up to me, the house of Boarstall . . . with all the ordnance, arms, and ammunition therein for the use and service of the Kingdom, which if you shall agree unto, you may expect civility and fair respect, other-

wise you may draw upon yourself those inconveniences, which I desire may be prevented. I expect your answer by this trumpet within one hour.

Your Servant,

'THO. FAIRFAX.'

'Sir William Campion to Sir Thomas Fairfax.

'SIR,—You have sent me a summons of a surrender of this house "for the service of the kingdom". I thought that cant had been long ere this very stale, sufficient only to cozen women and poor ignorant people; for your civilities, so far as they are consonant to my honour, I embrace ... but I am ready to undergo all inconveniences whatsoever, rather than submit to any, much less to those so dishonourable and unworthy propositions. This is the resolution of, Sir,

Yours,

'W. CAMPION.'[1]

Before the besieging force assaulted the place, Sir William asked one favour, that Lady Campion, who was in delicate health, should be allowed to go forth. This Sir Thomas refused with civil regrets, but added that if Lady Campion or any other gentlewoman fell into his hands, he would take care 'that the like cruelty may never be used by any of this army, which hath lately been executed by some of yours at Leicester'.

The attack was made on June 6, and repulsed by the garrison with much courage; Fairfax was 'beaten off with loss', and retired to Brickhill, thence to Newport Pagnell and Sherrington, where he met Vermuyden from the north, and Cromwell from Ely, their combined forces numbering more than 13,000 men. The good news that Boarstall had held out was received by Charles just after the storm and sack of Leicester; 'never,' says Dr. Gardiner, 'had Charles's prospects seemed brighter than when he was nearing his sudden and irreparable overthrow.' On June 14 the king's army was utterly defeated at Naseby; in August the king himself passed through Boarstall on his road from Wing to Oxford.

In the spring of 1646 Fairfax was again before Boarstall, summoning it to surrender. Sir William Campion writes to the king desiring to know his pleasure; they have been 'blocked up almost 8 weeks', 'yet I would not part with my trust without orders'.[1] The king was in no position to help his faithful servant; Oxford itself was being abandoned, and the smaller garrisons were quite isolated. Campion heard that 'my Lord Wharton and others' were much set against him by his obstinacy in defending a hopeless cause, and on June 3, 1646, just a year after his former repulse, Fairfax, writing from Water Eaton, sends commissioners to receive the surrender of the Boarstall garrison.

Sir William Campion was killed at the siege of Colchester in 1648, aged thirty-four; 'he was pious, valiant, constant to his prince, whose cause he chose, and whose service he died in.'

After this Lady Denham returned to her home, and was able to show kindness to a Royalist, Sir Thomas Fanshawe, who was marched through Boarstall, as a prisoner, after the battle of Worcester. He refused the money she offered him, but greatly desired a shirt and some handkerchiefs. She fetched the latter, and two smocks of her own, being ashamed to offer them, but she had none of her son's at home, and begged him to take them. Sir John Denham meanwhile was travelling in France, Holland, and even Poland, to get money for the exiled royal family. At the Restoration he was made Surveyor-General of Works, a post previously held by Inigo Jones; he is said to have designed Burlington House, Piccadilly; as his deputy he secured the young Christopher Wren, who is credited with building the Manor House in Winslow, the classical church at Willen, Fawley Court, the Upper School at Eton, and the choir of Chicheley Church.

Denham's after-life took him away from Boarstall, and the property passed later into the Aubrey family, who also owned the fine old house at Dorton. A picture at Dorton represents the only son of the house playing with a lamb. The child was accidentally poisoned, and the distracted father, in despair from the loss of his heir, pulled down the old house at Boarstall, which had withstood the shock of arms, and so many vicissitudes of fortune.

The fine gate-house still remains, with its guard-room and moat.

Sir John Denham is remembered by his poem on the view of London from Cooper's Hill, and his praise of the Thames with the famous concluding lines :—

'Thames, the most loved of all the Ocean's sons
By his old sire, to his embraces runs
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity. . . .
O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.'

[1] Lipscombe, *County History*.

CHAPTER XIV

JOHN MILTON, 1608–1674

While Strafford and Falkland, Hampden and Cromwell, were quietly growing up in the country, whose fate they were to influence so greatly, a boy was born in London who was to serve England in quite a different fashion, and leave as glorious a name as the best of the fighters and law-makers—John Milton.

The poet's grandfather was a substantial yeoman, living at Stanton St. John, between Brill and Oxford, who adhered to the old Catholic faith, and disinherited his son, John Milton, for joining the Church of England. The son went to London and became a scrivener, what we should call a solicitor, and being a man of probity and force of character made 'a plentiful fortune'. His little son, also named John, attended St. Paul's School, under the shadow of the old Gothic cathedral, and had a clever man, Thomas Young, as his private tutor. He had a sister, Anne, some years older than himself, and a brother, Christopher, seven years younger; he therefore did lessons alone and very strenuously. He was considered clever and promising, and his

father spared no expense in his education, and gave him what was yet more precious, his constant sympathy and supervision; the boy generally studied till midnight, in spite of headaches, and probably thus began to injure his eyesight.

Old London before the fire was wonderfully picturesque; in Milton's childhood Shakespeare was still alive, supping at the Mermaid Tavern, and producing his great plays at the Globe Theatre. 'It was a warm and happy home the boy grew up in. Peace, comfort, and industry reigned there. A grave Puritanic piety was the order of the house, religious reading and devout exercises were part of the regular life of the family. A regard for religion as the chief concern of life, and a dutiful love to the parents who so taught him, would be cultivated in Milton from his earliest years.' The interest in Bible-reading was stimulated by the new translations which were employing some of the best scholars of the time. Our Authorized Version in its fine, melodious English, appeared while Milton was a little boy. The scrivener who was a busy man at the head of his profession was not a slave to business; he loved books and he loved music even more. He had an organ in his house and his songs and melodies were well known in musical circles; the tunes still in our hymnbooks, York and Norwich, were written by him. John must often have listened to his father's organ-playing, and he was brought up to consider music and poetry as worthy of the most earnest study. The boy became a singer almost as soon as he could speak, and in his teens he was composing metrical versions of his favourite psalms. When Cornelius Jansen, a young Dutch painter, came over from Amsterdam, one of the first portraits he painted was that of the scrivener's son John, at ten years old, 'a grave intelligent little Puritan boy with close-cut auburn hair, and an expression of loveable seriousness.' As an elderly man Milton thus wrote of his recollected childhood—

> 'When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
> All righteous things.'

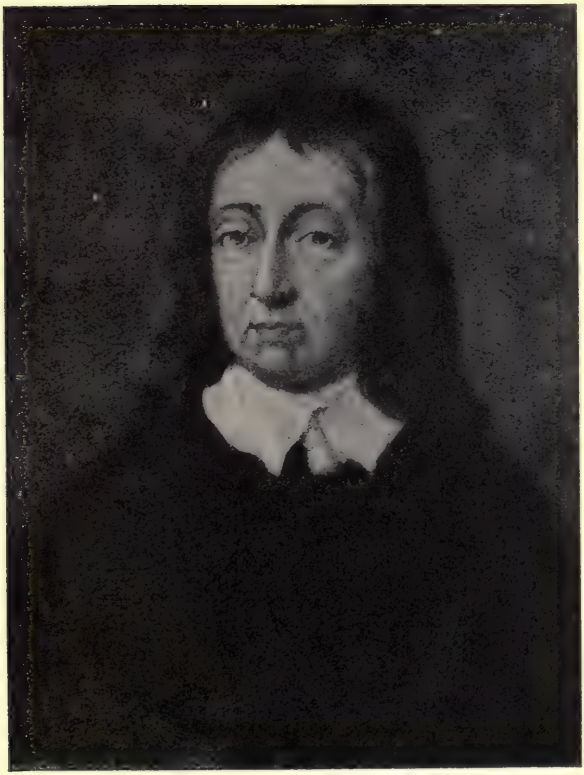
At sixteen, Milton was sent to Christ's College, Cambridge, the college of Latimer and Sir Philip Sidney; he was there for seven years, and his pure, austere life and great personal beauty won him the name of the Lady of Christ's. He matriculated just at the time of Charles I's accession; the plague was raging in London, where he spent his vacations, and in 1630 there was so terrible an outbreak of it at Cambridge that 'the University was in a manner wholly dissolved', most colleges being empty, the remaining men being close prisoners in their rooms; Milton retained through life the greatest horror of the plague. The most notorious death was that of old Hobson, the Cambridge carrier, who for fear of spreading infection was forbidden his constant journeys to and from London. Milton wrote two kindly and humorous epitaphs over the old man, who in his eighty-sixth year died of the boredom of being idle—

> 'Ease was his chief disease; and to judge right
> He died for heaviness that his cart went light;
> His leisure told him that his time was come;
> And lack of load made his life burdensome.'

Milton's ode on Shakespeare's death, and his beautiful Christmas hymn, the Ode on the Nativity, were written during these Cambridge years.

Changes had come about in his home, Anne Milton had married a Mr. Phillips, Christopher was at college; his father and mother left London and bought a country house at Horton, which was to be John Milton's home for the next six years. Much of his greatest poetry was written in Bucks, first at Horton and afterwards at Chalfont St. Giles.

In our day William Morris, the poet of *The Earthly Paradise*, loved to describe himself as 'the idle singer of an empty day', and emphasized the fact that he aimed at beauty rather than moral teaching. Such a mood would have been impossible to Milton. In his mind the poet was a prophet and teacher whose highest aim should be 'to justify the ways of God to man'; this purpose became more and more serious, through the political stress of his manhood and the blindness and trouble of his old age, when, like Jeremiah, he felt himself to be living among a people who had wholly fallen from righteousness; for him there



JOHN MILTON

From an engraving after the painting by Faithorne

could be no visions of an Earthly Paradise, his eyes blinded in this world saw Paradise Regained in ' a better country that is a heavenly '.

The young poet who wrote such graceful and lovely poems at Horton, as *Lycidas* and the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* (the joyful and the grave view of life), was full of enjoyment of Nature and Art, but as quite a youth he had definitely set before him the ideals, that a poet must be of noble and lofty character, a man of ' labour and intent study ', and that a great subject could alone inspire a great poem. He would gladly ' leave something so written to after times, as they should not willingly let it die '. In Masson's *Life of Milton* there is a charming description of the beauty of Horton and the surrounding country with its woods and nightingales, the stream of the Colne, as yet unvexed by paper-mills, flowing through the village, and to crown all the distant towers of Windsor ' bosom'd high in tufted trees '.

Young Milton had entered no profession, and he was always grateful to his father for the patience and sympathy which enabled him to prepare for life in his own way, in tranquillity of mind, amid the quiet, restful Buckinghamshire scenery, and with his beloved books. This time of preparation included a journey to Italy, after the death of his mother in 1637 ; on his return he settled in London, where he took in pupils, his nephew Edward Phillips and others, and his household was a model of ' hard study and spare diet '. After the meeting of the Long Parliament the share he took in the political and religious controversies of the time made Milton deliberately give up poetry for what he felt to be his duty to his country. After the execution of the king he became Latin Secretary to the Council of State, which brought him into constant intercourse with Fairfax, Vane, and Cromwell, and all the members of the House most worth knowing. He sacrificed his failing eyesight to his diligent work in writing and reading dispatches, but he had gained a new experience, an insight ' In all things that to generous actions lead '.

By the age of forty-three he was in total darkness, a calamity even greater to him than to most men, before his great poem long meditated was even begun. Just ' as the country had begun to reap the fruits of the costly efforts

it had made to obtain good government', Cromwell's death brought to an end with a crash all that Milton most cared for. Blind, a widower with three little girls, he became at the Restoration one of a proscribed and broken party, he had heavy money losses, and only just escaped with life and liberty. Milton resolutely turned his mind away from the politics of the Restoration; driven from London by the Great Plague in 1665, he settled once more in Bucks at Chalfont St. Giles, and gave himself up to the completion of his poem, *Paradise Lost*.

Those who knew him describe him as stately and courteous, though he could be very satirical. 'He would sit at his house door in a grey coarse cloth coat in fine weather to receive visitors; indoors he was neatly dressed in black. He rose at four in summer and five in winter; before breakfast the Bible was read to him in Hebrew. Then he read or dictated till midday; he took some exercise, walking, or, in wet weather, swinging; he always had music in the afternoon, saw his friends in the evening, and went to bed after a pipe and a glass of water.' He was, of course, dependent on a reader and writer; he would dictate twenty or thirty lines to any one who happened to be near him, sitting in an arm-chair with his leg over the elbow.

Milton's conception of woman was the exact opposite of Shakespeare's; women might be fair and mildly amiable, but he had never met (or never recognized) a Cordelia, a Portia, or a Hermione. He reaped as he sowed; he had laid it down that

> 'Nothing lovelier can be found
> In woman, than to study household good.'

He expected no intellectual companionship or moral support from women, and he found none. In early days his young wife, Mary Powell, a foolish, frightened girl, left him to go back to her mother for two years, and only returned after a difficult reconciliation. Elizabeth Minshull, the wife of his last years, looked kindly after his creature-comforts, but the old blind man, who had never known or cared what he ate and drank, was distracted by the stupidity of his meagrely educated daughters, and found no satisfaction at home for his fierce intellectual appetite.

The two elder girls, much bored with his claims upon them, learnt gold embroidery as a means of support. Deborah, the youngest, was more dutiful to her father, but it must have been a dreary task to read out to him in foreign languages when she did not understand the meaning of the words. Happily volunteers were to be found who considered it an honour to act as secretary, the most devoted being Thomas Ellwood, educated at the Thame Grammar School, who suffered much by joining the Bucks Quakers. He it was who found a house for Milton at Chalfont, and suggested to him to write a further poem on Paradise Regained. There is a pleasant tradition at Beaconsfield that Milton wrote a part of *Paradise Regained* in a grotto at Hall Barn in Edmund Waller's garden, a poet to whom fortune had been kinder. The last work of the poet-prophet was *Samson Agonistes*—'the record of an heroic soul totally defeated by an irreversible fate, and unflinchingly accepting the situation in the firm conviction of the righteousness of the cause.' 'The triumphant Royalist reaction of 1660 is singular in this, that the agonized cry of the beaten party has been preserved, in the intensest utterance of the most intense of English poets, *Samson Agonistes*.' [1]

Milton received two sums of £5, and no more, for *Paradise Lost*, a work which placed him next to Shakespeare in English literature, and among the half-dozen famous poets of the world. His political partisanship delayed the recognition of his greatness; Dryden at once appreciated it, but in the next century Dr. Johnson, in his grand manner, discovered much to find fault with in Milton's poems.

Cowper, perhaps of all poets the least like Milton, was up in arms in his defence. 'Was there ever anything so delightful,' he writes, 'as the music of *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ, has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute, variety without end and never equalled, except perhaps by Virgil. Yet the doctor has nothing to say . . . but something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse . . . Oh, I could thrash his old jacket, till I made his pension jingle in his pockets.'

That we may judge for ourselves how right Cowper was,

we close with the beautiful lines that tell how Milton felt and met his great affliction.

'Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works to me expung'd and rased
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather, thou celestial Light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.'

[1] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, &c.

CHAPTER XV

THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE PROTECTORATE

Aylesbury had had its full share in the fighting and the suffering of the Civil War. Cromwell, Fairfax, Luke, Fleetwood, and others of the Parliamentary generals were familiar figures in the neighbourhood. Cromwell stayed at Dinton Hall with Simon Mayne after the battle of Naseby, and left his sword, still kept there.

Prince Rupert had attempted to carry the town in a cavalry action known locally as the battle of Aylesbury. Chilton House narrowly escaped destruction, the village of Swanbourne was burnt down by the Cavaliers under circumstances of great cruelty. Winslow was pillaged, and brutal jests of the officers were remembered even more

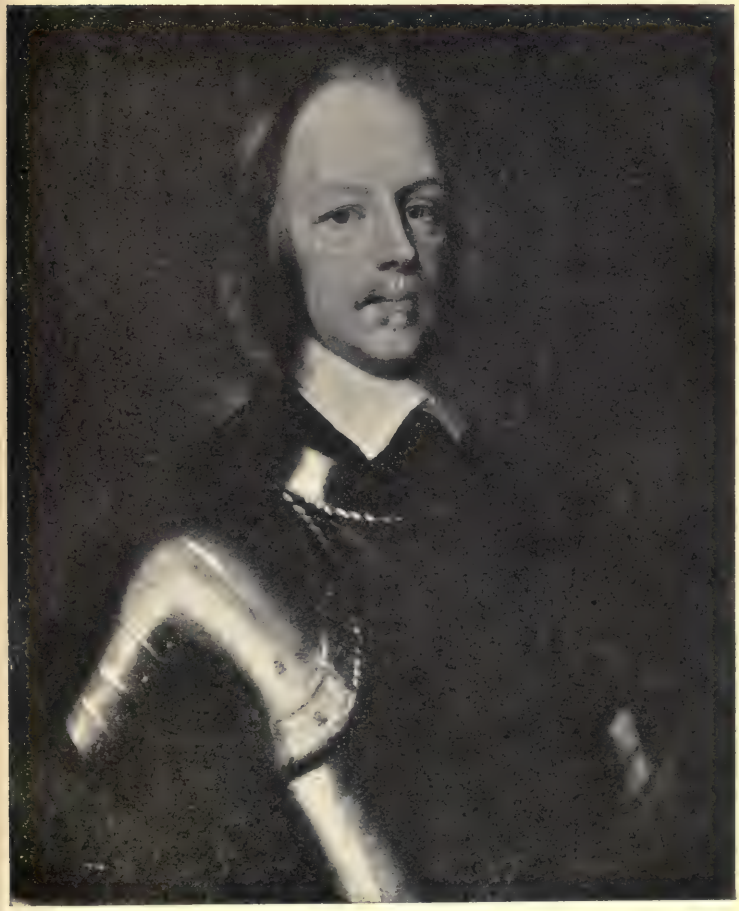
bitterly than material losses. On the whole the county sympathized with the Ironsides. In 1648 divers inhabitants of Bucks sent up their thanks to the Parliament for their unwearied labours for the public, and their great successes ; they gave their rulers some good advice, and affirmed their resolution to 'adhere unto and stand by them'. They received the thanks of the House 'for their constant good affections', and the Speaker told them that their petition was to be printed 'as a pattern for other counties'. Thomas Chaloner of Steeple Claydon, Thomas Scott of Aylesbury, Simon Mayne of Dinton, Richard Ingoldsby of Lenborough, Cornelius Holland of Creslow, Adrian Scrope of Wormsley, Richard Deane of Princes Risborough, Sir George Fleetwood, Sir Peter Temple of Biddlesden, and other Bucks men, signed Charles I's death-warrant. But the violence of the procedure and the patience of the sufferer sent a thrill of sorrow and pity throughout England. The black, masked figure of the king's executioner became the centre of many legends, and in Bucks it was whispered that the mysterious creature who lived in a cave at Dinton was the man. John Bigg, the Dinton Hermit, passed his life in savage solitude ; his clothes and his shoes (still preserved) were a marvel of clouts and patches kept together with nails ; he survived the Restoration and the Revolution, and when the Stuarts had been finally driven from England his bones were laid at Dinton, near those of his master, Simon Mayne, who died in the Tower of London in 1661.

Among the Bucks regicides Colonel Richard Deane played the greatest part after the king's death. He was related to Cromwell and Hampden, and enjoyed the intimate friendship and confidence of the Protector. After some seafaring experience and as a subaltern of artillery, he was made Comptroller of the Ordnance, and contributed greatly to the victories at Naseby and Worcester, in Scotland, and in Ireland. As admiral and general at sea he did much to improve the navy as he had before improved the artillery, and fought the Dutch with Blake and Monck. In a naval engagement off the North Foreland in 1653 one of the first shots struck Deane, and he fell where he stood. Monck threw a cloak over his dead friend, and after a two-days' fight the Dutch fleet was routed. The

highest honours were bestowed on the admiral's body: after lying in state at Greenwich he was buried in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey; but in common with Blake, his remains were dug up again after the Restoration.

Adrian Scrope lived to meet with a more tragic fate. He, too, distinguished himself in the Civil War, and raised a troop of horse for the Parliament; he married Mary Waller of Beaconsfield, a cousin of the poet. In his beautiful old home, Wormsley, on the border-line of Bucks and Oxon., folded away in the wooded slopes of the Chilterns, there is a fine portrait of Scrope by Walker. He was tried after the Restoration; he is described as a comely ancient gentleman; he defended himself with dignity and moderation, but he was hung with all insulting cruelty, which he bore, while life lasted, with cheerful courage.

About the time of the king's execution the troops quartered in Bucks were being moved to Ireland. The cruel story of that war does not concern us, except that the officer in command of Ormonde's regiment at Drogheda was Sir Edmund Verney of Claydon (a younger son of the standard-bearer), who was treacherously murdered after the surrender of the town. The hopes of the Cavaliers revived when Charles II was crowned in Scotland and invaded England, but his army was entirely routed by Cromwell at Worcester on September 3, 1651. Cromwell's own letter to the Parliament calls this 'a crowning Mercy'. 'What the slain are I can give you no account . . . but they are very many because the dispute was long, very near at hand and often at push of pike; there are about six or seven thousand prisoners taken and 158 colours.' An old account says that the Lord General 'marched up in a triumphant manner to London driving 4,000 or 5,000 Prisoners like sheep before him'. Among them was Sir John Packington, lord of the manor of Aylesbury, on whom a heavy fine was imposed and whose mansion at Aylesbury was demolished. Cromwell entered the town with the pomp and display of a conqueror; all the troops quartered in the neighbourhood were assembled to make a great military spectacle; the streets were filled with the unfortunate prisoners. Outside the town commissioners met him to convey to him the formal thanks of Parliament. 'Crom-



ADRIAN SCROPE

From a picture at Wormsley, by permission of F. W. Fane Esq.

well received the deputation with all kindness and respect and rode with them across the fields,' where Mr. Winwood, who was a-hawking, met them, and the Lord General went a little out of his way to enjoy the hawking,' a sport he was very partial to. 'They then came to Aylesbury where they had much discourse as they supped together,' and the next day the tragic cavalcade went on to London.

After Worcester it seemed that the country was about to settle down, Cavalier and Roundhead together, with some mutual respect; Richard Hampden was in Cromwell's Upper House; the Speaker of Barebones' Parliament had become Provost of Eton. Sir Richard Temple had large parties to hunt the stag in the park at Stowe. Colonel Henry Verney, who had fought for the king, met Richard Cromwell and Claypole (Cromwell's son-in-law) at country-house shooting-parties; Sir Ralph Verney returned from exile and began repairing his home and stocking his garden; but Cromwell found it impossible to govern either with or without a parliament. Royalist plots against his life were many and avowed, and men began again to look askance at their neighbours. There was a curious instance of this at Aylesbury in 1655.

Mr. Henn, an active justice of the peace and a sequestrator, noted two strangers who had ridden into the town, mud-splashed and travel-stained, and had put up at the White Hart Inn, an old gabled house on the site of the present market behind the Town Hall. How picturesque the Aylesbury inns were then we can judge by the old buildings of the 'King's Head'.

The justice bustled in and, calling the host Gilvey, a well-known Cromwellian, plied him with questions about his guests, inspected the tired horses with their handsome trappings, and charged him to lock the stable-door that the strangers should not be able to get away till he had examined them in the morning. The host, not too pleased to have his guests interfered with, locked the door and put the key in his pocket, and the justice went home to supper. Later his guests sent for Gilvey and threw themselves on his mercy; they were two important Cavaliers, the Earl of Rochester and Sir Nicholas Armourer, who had come over to reconnoitre and to report to the king over the

water. They told him that it would be quite easy to betray them to certain death, but what good would that be to him, they would rather trust themselves to his compassion. The host replied that he had given his word to detain their horses till the morning, and that his word must be kept; but that if in the night they chose to steal two nags of his he should know nothing about it. The gentlemen gave him a gold chain and a pocketful of gold coins; at midnight they got up, noiselessly mounted two horses in another stable ready saddled and bridled, and after creeping through the dark silent town, they galloped to London. Here Lord Rochester disguised himself by wearing a large flaxen wig and speaking French, and when pursuit was over they both rejoined Charles at Cologne.

Meanwhile at Aylesbury there was blank dismay, the justice duly came in the morning, the key of the stables was safe in the host's pocket, there were the horses, but the bedroom, hastily searched, was found empty. The justice stormed and reported to the Government, who blamed him for not securing the men overnight—the host had no explanation to offer. Years after, when Lord Rochester was on the winning side, he built a large room on to the White Hart Inn; the host Gilvey was sent for to court by Charles II and had no reason to repent that he had kept the laws of hospitality unbroken.

All over the county the Royalist squires and others who had never been Royalists were at the mercy of informers and panic-mongers. In the midst of his quiet and useful life Sir Ralph Verney was arrested in June 1655: 'being now brought to Town,' he writes, 'with divers Lords and other persons of quality for we know not what . . . and though I must confess the Soldiers that took me at Claydon used me very civilly yet they took all the Pistolls and Swords in the house, and carried me to Northampton thence to Brickhill and London.'[1] He was confined in St. James's Palace and tried to make a joke of it. 'The Protector hath highly obliged me in sending for me from my own cottage to lodge me in his Palace, with a guard upon me day and night which is usual to none but Princes.' The shock was great to every one at Claydon. Will Roades, the steward who vainly tried to see his master

again, sent him up a letter, full of pious consolation, together with a venison pasty. Mr. Stafford of Winslow and others of Sir Ralph's neighbours were also in confinement; 'for these country gentlemen accustomed to do all their business on horseback it was most irksome and unwholesome to be penned up in London during the summer months, and one after another suffered in health.'[1] At the assizes at Buckingham, the judge in his charge defended the Protector's action, and assured the Grand Jury that no innocent person would eventually suffer.

They were kept until October, and released on what Sir Ralph termed 'barbarous conditions'; they promised 'to abstain from plotting against the Government, and to give information against those who did so'.

The county was now divided into districts each under a major-general, who commanded the militia, with a body of commissioners who were charged to get returns of all property held by Royalists to be supertaxed to meet the heavy expenses rendered necessary, it was alleged, by their plots against the Government.[1] Sir Ralph had scarcely settled at home when he found himself, with forty others, summoned to appear before Fleetwood, the major-general at Aylesbury, sitting with half the gentlemen of the county as judges, to assess the other half, their friends and neighbours, as delinquents. 'For the community at large the danger lay in the growing habit of the executive, strong in military support, to deal out penalties at its own will and pleasure.'

Dreadful heart-burnings ensued, some petitioned the Protector, only to be referred back to the major-general. Mr. William Smith of Akeley was one of the sufferers, and had to pay a tenth of his income. It would have comforted the Bucks squires who rode away from the 'George' in Aylesbury with such unpleasant documents buttoned under their riding coats, could they have foreseen how soon these military tribunals were to be swept away when Parliament met. But the intense irritation they had caused, uniting men of opposite parties in a common grievance, did much, even in a county like Bucks, to reconcile the squires on the Puritan side to a Stuart Restoration. 'There were few indeed who would not have joined with Thomas Stafford

in his daily petition to our Heavenly Father that He would grant us a speedy deliverance out of the power of the major-generals and restore us to the protection of the common law.'[1]

Colonel Richard Beke of Haddenham, descended from Queen Elizabeth's chief equerry, was a man of mark during the Protectorate; he was the last man knighted by Richard Cromwell before the Restoration. He made his peace with the Stuarts and was M.P. for Aylesbury and later for Wendover; he is buried at Dinton, where his old age was spent.

Out of this welter of conflicting opinions, religious and political, eccentric figures emerge, who seem like caricatures of the earnest men, suffering for righteousness' sake in both camps, yet utterly sincere. Such a man was Robert Crab, another Bucks hermit, born at Buckingham, of a much more intellectual type than John Biggs.

He fought for seven years in the Parliamentary army; he was a deeply religious man, a mystic, a fanatical vegetarian, and devoted to animals, whom he could not bear to see ill-treated. From eating roots he took to a watery broth thickened with bran; as a pudding he prescribed turnip leaves chopped up with bran; he finally settled down to a simple régime of dock leaves and grass. He lived on three farthings a week, wearing 'a sackcloth frock with no band on his neck' in a hut of his own building.[2] Crab preached, disputed, and meditated, and while digging up his parsnips saw 'visions of the Paradise of God'. He dabbled in astrology and medicine, and had at one time 120 patients. His diet rules gave great offence to well-fed ministers and physicians; he was denounced at Chesham 'as a witch', and imprisoned for a time at Clerkenwell without any food at all, until a good dog brought him a bit of bread. He wrote his own life as the *Wonder of the Age*; he published a violent theological book called *Dagon's Downfall*, and another attacking the Quakers; he foretold the Restoration and the coming of William III, and became a prophet of some repute. He removed himself and his hermitage in old age to Bethnal Green, where he died, and was buried in Stepney Church in 1680.

But in spite of his various callings as soldier, doctor,

prophet, author, vegetarian and hermit, Crab would have been long forgotten, had he not set up at Chesham, on leaving the army, as a 'haberdasher of hats'. He prospered greatly, but he persisted in praying behind his counter, and in 1651 he sold his shop and all his goods to give to the poor, and after such outrageous proceedings, won the immortal nickname of the Mad Hatter. He is, therefore, the undoubted ancestor of the fourth guest who took tea in Wonderland, with Alice, the Dormouse, and the March Hare; and he furnishes us with a link between the troublous times of the Commonwealth in Bucks, and the most charming fairy tale of our own day.

[1] *Verney Memoirs.* [2] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

CHAPTER XVI

THE FERMENT OF THE RESTORATION

One of the most dramatic moments in English history was the Restoration of the exiled Charles II on his thirtieth birthday by the acclamations of the nation that had defeated him in a hard fought fight and beheaded his father.

The news from London roused the whole country; 'such universal acclamations of wild and sober joy I never yet saw,' wrote Mr. Butterfield, Rector of Claydon, in those bright May days of 1660, 'we had our bonfire and bells ringing even at Claydon; heaven and earth seem to conspire to make a fair and fruitful spring of plenty and joy to this poor kingdom. The fields and pastures begin to put on their best dress as if to entertain His Majesty and make him in love with his native soil.'[1] Men who had tried to be neutral now furbished up the rusty memory of a Royalist ancestor; William Abell, the Squire of East Claydon, began making a collection for 'the poore King', and Mr. Townshend, Rector of Radcliffe, stirred up the clergy to do the same; but in a countryside so impoverished this was considered officious and uncalled for. The Bucks peers were resplendent in new robes, the Bucks squires

trooped up to the coronation, and wrote home to less fortunate friends that the gallantry and lustre of this great solemnity 'no pen nor ink can express'. Ribbons and titles were lavishly bestowed. The defender of Hillesden became Sir William Smith; Thomas Lee of Hartwell, Richard Ingoldsby of Lenborough, Sir Ralph Verney of Claydon, and Henry Andrewes of Lathbury, were made baronets. Dr. James Fleetwood of Chalfont St. Giles was the first chaplain in ordinary to the king; Captain Peter Dayrell received a knighthood in the order of the Royal Oak. The trained bands met at Winslow under Captain Edmund Stafford, with 'the Colours, Leading Staff, Partizans, Halberts, Muskets, and drums' to be trained 'according to the modern discipline of war', the county also raised a 'Volunteer Troop of Horse' to meet at Aylesbury. Bell-ringing and fireworks were the order of the day, the theatres were re-opened, horse-racing, bull-baiting, and cock-fighting were again in vogue. One voice indeed was raised to warn the nation that we were 'losing by a strange after-game of folly all the battles we have won, all the treasure we have spent', but no one heeded the blind prophet. Milton's political writings were ordered by the House of Commons to be publicly burnt, with whatever of contempt the action of the common hangman could bestow.

Many devoted Royalists had died before seeing the return of the Stuarts, for whom they had suffered so much. Among these was Sir Anthony Chester, of Chicheley (1593–1651), who fought at Naseby, and lent Charles I large sums of money. His fine house was defaced and ruined, and he fled to Holland, but crept back to die at home, and was buried at Chicheley with his forefathers.

The loyal and long-exiled clergy returned to their benefices, the Prayer Book was restored to the churches, Sir Ralph Verney, and probably many other laymen, presented their parish priests with new surplices, trees were given to the church at Winslow 'towards the making of a gallery'.[1]

The country parsons of Bucks had suffered less than in other counties during the Presbyterian rule. Peel, Vicar of Wycombe, had been 'absolutely the first man of all the clergy whom the party began to fall upon', and Oakeley,

Vicar of Hillesden, had shared the imprisonment of the Dentons; only nine clergymen seem to have been actually dispossessed, but there were many sad stories here as elsewhere.

Matthew Bate, Rector of Maids Moreton and Leckhamstead, died in 1642, broken-hearted, after seeing his beautiful church at Maids Moreton wrecked by Colonel Purefoy and his soldiers. The parish register records that 'the windows were broken, a costly desk . . . a spread eagle gilt, on which Bp. Jewell's works used to be laid, doomed to perish as an abominable idol & the Cross (which with its fall had like to have broke out the brains of him who did it) was cut off the steeple'. Lillingstone Dayrell Church was also injured by soldiers, who destroyed the font and did other damage.[2]

George Roberts, Rector of Hambleden, was one of the ejected clergy in 1642; he was sent for by the House of Commons as a delinquent, but fled to the king at Oxford; he survived the Restoration by a few months only. A monument in Hambleden Church preserves the memory of his sorrows and of his restoration 'by the never to be forgotten mercy of His Majesty's return'.

John Barton, Vicar of Aylesbury, was driven out in 1645, but he received shelter at Wotton House, where he acted as chaplain to Mr. Grenville.

John Gregory of Amersham (1607–1646), a distinguished linguist and scholar, had no such friend, and died in an obscure ale-house in the greatest poverty.

Dr. Dillon of Shenley 'died in jail; he was a person of great learning and of a good life and conversation'.

John Fournesse was driven out of his living at Great Marlow, but reinstated after the Restoration.

Anthony Tyringham, Rector of Tyringham, had a worse fate. He was robbed and wounded by soldiers in a brutal fashion near Whitechurch, so that when he reached Aylesbury on a dark November night, 'the Surgeons were forced to cut off his arm.' 'He bore the loss,' writes a good Royalist,' with incredible patience and magnanimity, telling the rebels that notwithstanding all their ill usage of him he hoped he should live to see them hang'd.' He failed in his hope.

Gilbert Sheldon was Rector of Ickford in 1636, which he held with another living ; he was a man of strong character and practical ability ; a personal friend of Charles I. Sheldon was turned out of his cure in 1647, and for a time imprisoned ; he remained in hiding in Derbyshire, and collected money for the royal cause. After the Restoration he was made Bishop of London, and then Archbishop of Canterbury, and set himself with great energy to help the poorer clergy, and to take up Laud's work in the church. He remained at Lambeth during the worst time of the plague, preserving numbers of poor people alive who must otherwise have perished ; he raised a fund for rebuilding St. Paul's after the fire, to which he gave largely.

In 1676 the Archbishop had a religious census taken, from which it is possible to obtain returns for almost every Bucks parish. The population of the county was computed at 68,618, of whom only 364 were Romanists, 3,862 Nonconformists, and some 64,364 attended their parish churches. Sheldon never married, and delighted to devote his large income to 'public, pious uses'. He employed Sir Christopher Wren to build at a cost of £25,000 the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, in which on great occasions the University degrees are still conferred. As he had comforted Charles I in his adversity, so he fearlessly rebuked Charles II and his wicked court ; his known generosity and disinterestedness gave him great influence in the country. In Bucks the former Rector of Ickford was known as a cruel religious persecutor, together with the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Bridgwater, also an excellent man ; in their day, alas, persecution stood for religious zeal, and toleration was held to be indifference. Such men 'were creating day by day the martyrology of dissent'.

Many of the 'intruded clergy' had ministered in their parishes with great devotion for sixteen or seventeen years ; when, in 1662, the Act of Uniformity was passed, only a few conformed, the greater number left home and cure and went out penniless into the world as bravely as their predecessors had done, and became known as Nonconformists.

So on both sides there was much suffering for righteousness' sake. A typical case was that of Samuel Clarke ; his father and grandfather were clergymen, and he was brought

up for holy orders from the time he was a Cambridge undergraduate ; he worked at an annotated Bible, a well-known and useful book in its day. Refusing to take the engagement of fidelity to the Commonwealth, he was turned out of a fellowship ; he was afterwards appointed Rector of Grendon Underwood by Squire Pigott of Doddershall.[1] He was an excellent preacher, and loved his garden, his grape vines, and his books, but he was so much opposed to the arbitrary action of the Church after the Restoration, that he and his two sons resigned their livings in 1662, and subsequent persecutions drove him further from Episcopacy. Philip, Lord Wharton, provided him a home at Winchendon, where he never gave 'the least umbrage of suspicion'. But some years later he was seized in his old parish by 'Lord Brackley's Troopers', and detained at the Red Lion Inn, Aylesbury, whence he appealed to Sir Ralph Verney, as a magistrate, to be either tried or released. He at length found a refuge at High Wycombe, where in Puritan phrase he founded 'a gathered church' in his own house ; he died suddenly while leading the prayers of his people in 1701, and was buried in the parish church.

Mr. Nathaniel Vincent, ejected from Langley Marish, went up to London just after the great fire, and preached 'to large multitudes in the ruins'. His popularity brought him into adverse notice, 'red-coat soldiers' were sent to disperse his hearers ; once 'they rudely pull'd him out of the pulpit by the hair of the head after they had planted four muskets at the four corners of his pulpit, with which he seemed not terrified. He endured long periods of imprison ment, aggravated by severe attacks of ague, when he consoled himself by writing *A Covert from the Storm*, a book 'to encourage the Fearful in times of suffering'.

John Gibbs, vicar of Newport Pagnell, being ejected from the living, remained on in the town, where a congregation gathered round him and held him in high esteem ; George Swinho, of St. Leonards, settled at Princes Risborough, where he too ministered to those who came to him. Mr. Bennet, ejected from Waddesdon, preached privately in Aylesbury. These and many more good men were lost to the Church.

Matthew Mead, of a Soulbury family, held the Duncombe

living at Great Brickhill during the Commonwealth; Cromwell promoted him to Shadwell, but being ejected in 1662, he retired to Holland. In 1674 a great meeting-house was built for him at Stepney, to which he contributed four large pillars, the gift of the States General; he died in 1699.

The Dissenters were treated with still greater rigour. Benjamin Keach (1640 to 1704) was a well-known Baptist minister. He was born of poor parents at Stoke Hammond, and baptized in the parish church; later, under the influence of John Russell, a Baptist minister at Chesham, he was baptized again at fifteen, and worked as a tailor. At the age of nineteen Keach became a zealous preacher; in 1664 he was seized and imprisoned for preaching at Winslow, where he had found his wife, Jane Grove, and where he ministered in a humble little chapel in Pillars' Ditch. He had not long been released, when he was arrested again for writing and printing the *Child's Instructor*, a Baptist catechism. He was tried at Aylesbury before Sir Robert Hyde, sent to prison without bail, and sentenced 'to stand in the pillory at Aylesbury in the open market', and again in the pillory at Winslow, where his 'seditious and venomous book' was to be burnt before his face, and he was fined £20.[4] Another time, while he was preaching at Winslow, the little meeting-house was surrounded, Keach was seized, and with much violence and indignity tied across a horse, and so taken again to Aylesbury. The bitterness of the trial was increased by the knowledge that the Rector of Stoke Hammond, who had been appointed under the Commonwealth, and had just conformed, was the one to inform against him. In 1668 Keach took refuge in London, but he was a man of too much originality to please any authority. He published a collection of hymns and first introduced congregational singing in his chapel, which the London Baptist Association of 1689 condemned as 'a carnal formality'. His brother, Henry Keach, a miller at Soulbury, had sometimes a meeting in his mill of one hundred, 'all mean people,' as their persecutors described them; and from thence John Griffith and Jonathan Jennings were sent to Aylesbury Gaol. The name remains in Keach's Meeting House and burial ground at Winslow,

one of the oldest dissenting chapels still existing in Bucks. His little persecuted flock met at Granborough, Oving, and North Marston in private houses, taught by John Hartnell, a thatcher of North Marston.

There was a strange character, Richard Carpenter (1609–1670), born at Newport Pagnell, whose life was a progression by antagonism. Sent by the Pope as a Benedictine to convert England, he became an Independent minister: after abusing the Church of England, to which he once belonged, and the Baptists against whom he wrote a pamphlet, in the coarse humour of the time, called 'Anabaptists washt, and washt, and shrunk in the Washing'; he preached at Aylesbury with some ability and notoriety, and returned finally into the Roman fold.

Churchmen and Dissenters agreed in hatred and persecution of the Quakers. The historian, Lecky, calls them 'an eccentric but most admirable sect which will always be remembered for its noble services to the causes of religious toleration and the abolition of slavery.' In later times they have been distinguished by their great benevolence, the quaint, quiet decorum of their manners, their austere morality, and their protests against wasteful luxury and ostentation. They refused to take oaths, to pay tithes, or to enter the army, and they also objected to things which seemed quite harmless to ordinary people. They would not use the names of the months or of the days of the week, because some of them were called after heathen gods; they said *thee* and *thou* instead of *you*, and they would not take off their hats in salutation, or use any title of courtesy.

George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, was intended to be a clergyman, but he found no rest in the churches who were 'refuting and reviling each other' He would sit with his Bible in an orchard, or walk about the fields thinking deeply and in silence; he spent some time at Newport Pagnell, and wandered about this and other counties, where 'his strange face, his irremoveable hat, and his leather breeches were well known.' In 1657 Isaac Penington heard Fox preach, and he and his wife, formerly Lady Springett, publicly joined the society. Penington was a man of good family and fortune, well

known in South Bucks. He lived first at Datchet, then at The Grange, Chalfont St. Giles, where the Quakers met for worship before the meeting-house at Jordans was built. A young man, Thomas Ellwood, lived in the house for seven years, as tutor to the children. Penington was a very clever man, and of transparent modesty and gentleness. In 1660 he was in Aylesbury Gaol with seventy other Quakers; they were confined in a decayed building 'not fit for a dog-house', which in the year of the great plague became a dreadful centre of infection. Penington, who had neither strong health nor high spirits, yet bore his sufferings and privations so gallantly, that he cheered up all his fellow prisoners. Mary Penington took a small house in Aylesbury to be near her husband in this anxious time. He had bitterly offended the Earl of Bridgwater by refusing to bow or to call him my Lord; the Grange was confiscated, and when at last he was released by the Court of King's Bench, 'with the wonder of the Court that a man could be so long imprisoned for nothing,' he settled at Woodside, near Amersham. There were times when all the adult Quakers were in prison, and the meetings were kept up by the children.

Thomas Ellwood, Milton's friend and reader, the tutor in Penington's family, was another of the Bucks Quakers. He, too, knew well the horrors of the Aylesbury Gaol; he was sent there once with Penington and others for no offence but that of attending a Quaker's funeral at Amersham. He wrote an account of his own life and several religious books, and died at Hanger Hill, near Amersham. Wycombe Quakers—Littleboy, Trone, Cock, Steevens, and others—also suffered imprisonment 'in a loathsome dungeon in Frogmore Ward', and Zachary, a Beaconsfield Quaker, was heavily fined for attending a service.

Meanwhile a more famous man, William Penn, a scholar and statesman, the son of a distinguished admiral, had joined the Quakers and married Penington's stepdaughter, Gulielma Springett; a maiden 'clothed', it was said, 'with soft and angelic radiance.' Penn's career belongs to the general history of the seventeenth century: he founded the Quaker State of Pennsylvania, the only settlement of Europeans in America made without force of arms, and

with due regard to the rights of the natives. After his many long journeys, William Penn died in England, and was buried at Jordans, where his two wives and his friends, Isaac Penington and Thomas Ellwood, had been already laid. This little meeting-house of Jordans, with its graveyard, is the most sacred spot on earth to the Society of Friends, and is still visited by many pilgrims from America.

In Newport Pagnell, where Fox preached, some honoured names are still connected with the Church he founded; there are old meeting-houses at Buckingham and Olney; there were little bodies of Friends in many of the villages, but their conscientious objection to paying tithes has caused their removal from the agricultural districts.

In the course of years many extravagances of enthusiasm and many eccentricities of dress and manners have been abandoned, but the Friends have taught a quarrelsome and noisy world the beauty of peace and mercy, of patience, gravity, and silence.

[1] *Verney Memoirs.*
[2] Lipscombe, *County History.*
[3] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*
[4] Clear, *History of Winslow.*

CHAPTER XVII

THE WHARTONS OF WINCHENDON AND WOOBURN

THE story of the three Whartons who are connected with the county as Baron, Marquis, and Duke is one of extraordinary contrasts and vicissitudes of fortune; of wealth, talent, and popularity used and abused.

From 'the good Lord Wharton', the Roundhead of the Civil War, to his grandson the Jacobite Duke, who died outlawed and worn out at the age of thirty-two, the three generations of statesmen, soldiers, sportsmen and spendthrifts exemplified all that fortune could bestow of dignity and of misery.

In Wooburn Church there is a gravestone to Arthur, 'only son while he lived, to Philip Lord Wharton, born and died in 1641, aged 9 months'—

> 'Let an infant teach the man
> Since this life is but a span
> Use it so, as thou mayest be
> Happy in the next with me.'

The quaint doggerel is in grotesque contrast with the lives of the baby's brothers and nephew.

The Whartons had been settled for generations in Yorkshire and Westmoreland, but Philip, fourth Baron Wharton (born 1613), lived in South Bucks, at Wooburn House, which he enlarged at great expense.

There is a beautiful portrait by Vandyck of Philip Lord Wharton as a shepherd-boy, which has strayed away as far as to St. Petersburg. He was one of the handsomest men of his time, and was proud of his fine legs in dancing. He collected pictures, and was a lover of architecture and of gardening; but, though his tastes inclined him to become a fine gentleman and a courtier, he threw in his lot with the Puritans, and incurred the special displeasure of King Charles and Strafford for his share in a petition against the billeting of soldiers in private houses. He was a prominent member of the House of Lords during the Long Parliament; a friend of Cromwell, Hampden, the Goodwins, and the Verneys; he was made Lord-Lieutenant of Bucks in 1642, and later in the same year took the field under the Earl of Essex for the Parliament, and fought at Edgehill. He was sent by Essex to give a report of the battle to a Committee of the Two Houses and the Lord Mayor in the City. With much frankness he acknowledged that his own regiment of young soldiers ran away, but saved their colours; and he gave an account of the death of his friend and neighbour, Sir Edmund Verney, the standard-bearer. When the king was defeated, Wharton inclined to mercy, and strongly disapproved of his execution.

His second wife (married 1637) was Jane, daughter of Arthur Goodwin, at whose death they inherited the fine estate of Winchendon; she brought him many sons and

daughters. He was in mourning for her loss at the time of the Restoration, ' but to give his black a look of joy on that occasion, his buttons were so many diamonds.' Though he welcomed Charles II, he was suspected by the Government, and his married daughter, Lady Willoughby de Eresby, crossing over the ferry at Lambeth, heard the other passengers discussing the Act of Grace, and saying that her father's name would be left out of it, though Sir Christopher Pigott and other Bucks Roundheads were included. Being a wise woman she held her tongue, but made her husband go at once to the king, and so earnestly did he plead his cause that Lord Wharton was pardoned, and very justly.

He loyally served King Charles, disagreed with James II, and was one of the first peers to welcome William III. He lived to be eighty-three, and to moralize on the shrunken condition of the legs he was once so proud of. He left money for 1,050 Bibles and catechisms to be given to the children, at Waddesdon and Wooburn and elsewhere, who had learnt by heart seven specified psalms ; the books were to be bound in calfskin and sheepskin to benefit the farming interest.

Thomas, first Marquess of Wharton, born 1648, was entirely unlike his father, though they were much attached to each other. His boyhood during the Commonwealth was passed abroad, ' amid Geneva bands, heads of lank hair, upturned eyes, and sermons three hours long,' but he broke away violently from all Puritan traditions. He was very popular and sociable, full of fun and wit, but quite unprincipled ; a sportsman, a gambler, and a keen fighting politician. He was elected M.P. for Wendover at the age of twenty-five, and married in the same year sweet Anne Lee of Ditchley, a considerable heiress, a cultivated and charming woman, whose skill as a poetess won for her the admiration of Dryden and Waller, and the friendship of Bishop Burnet. ' Tom Wharton ' treated her with scant respect ; when their marriage contract was to be signed he put off starting till the last possible moment, and then drove twenty-two miles in two hours, rattling over shocking roads, and just saved the situation. His wife's dowry enabled him to cut a great figure at Newmarket and at Quainton and

Newport races, and he prided himself in the possession of a famous racehorse, 'Careless,'[1] which Louis XIV had vainly tried to buy. His horses were magnificently lodged at Winchendon House, with carved mangers and racks, and stucco and gilded ceilings to the stables. The letters of the time are full of Tom and his brother Harry Wharton, their hard riding and driving, and feasting, their brawls and duels and practical jokes, but Tom Wharton had a more serious side, and was the popular hero of a famous Bucks election. He was a strong Protestant and Whig, and had brought up from the Commons to the Bar of the Lords the Bill to exclude James, as a Catholic, from succeeding to the throne.

The general election which followed the death of Charles II in 1685 was keenly contested in Bucks. Sir Ralph Verney and his cousin, Sir Richard Temple, who had won Buckingham for the Whigs in 1681, stood again for the two seats which, down to 1832, depended on the votes of thirteen burgesses; the Tory candidates were Lord Latimer and Sir John Busby of Addington. At Amersham 'the town was full of Ale and Noise and Tobacco'[2]; at Aylesbury the Whig candidates were quarrelling among themselves. The roads, and even the green lanes, were alive with riders and rumbling coaches taking the numerous candidates about. In the picturesque manor houses by the wayside the gentry kept a supply of 'sherry-sack, sugar, and nutmeg' to give their friends a stirrup-cup as they rode past. But the borough contests paled before the excitement of the county election, in which all the influence of the Crown was to be pitted against that of the Whartons. Judge Jeffreys had bought Bulstrode Manor House, where in 1678 Charles II stayed with him and drank his health seven times in succession, and he was already notorious in the county. He took charge of the contest; the Government candidate was Thomas Hackett, 'an unknown young gentleman of Newport Pagnell'. Sir Ralph Verney writes how 'my Lord Chief Justice like a torrent carries all before him'; 'this demi-fiend, this hurricane of a man,' as the election ballads call him. Macaulay has told the story how Jeffreys, finding the Whartons too strong at Aylesbury, adjourned the poll to Newport 'in the heart of Mr. Hackett's

ANNE LEE—MRS. T. WHARTON
From a picture at Claydon House

country'; and how the Whigs arrived to find every available lodging and stable engaged, and food and provender bought up. They were compelled to tie their horses to the hedges and to lie in the open fields; but Jeffreys had misjudged his men, the Bucks spirit was up, and Wharton and Lord Brackley were returned in triumph.

After this the political influence of the Whartons was without a rival. Tom Wharton spared no expense at elections, kissed the babies, remembered all their names, and was considered a model candidate! In later years his journeys through the county to Quarter Sessions resembled Royal Progresses. 'The bells of every parish were rung as he passed through, and flowers strewn along the road.' With his versatile talents he dealt a shrewd blow at King James, writing a song known by its refrain of Lilliburlero, which, set to music by Purcell, was sung by the army, the town, and the country, and became such a powerful weapon on the popular side that Wharton boasted after the Revolution that he had sung a king out of three kingdoms!

He obtained high office under William and Mary; he was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and made Joseph Addison his secretary.

Anne Wharton died soon after her husband's famous election; she had occupied herself in writing religious poems and dramas; by Bishop Burnet's advice she never sought for a separation; she had no child to love her, and their splendid home was to her a sad and lonely one.

Wharton's second wife, Lucy Loftus, brought him another large fortune; William III, whom he entertained magnificently at Wooburn, stood sponsor, together with Princess Anne, to his only son, baptized at Winchendon. He had passed middle life when he succeeded his father in 1696; he was made Marquess of Wharton for his political services, an honour he had enjoyed for two months only when his life and his plottings ended together in 1715. 'The most universal villain I ever knew' was Swift's summary of his life, but Swift was his bitter enemy. Even his funeral (April 22, 1715) could not be carried through without a dramatic sensation. As the long black procession wound up the steep, green lanes to Winchendon, it was

suddenly arrested by the strange darkness of a total eclipse.[3] After the first moments of consternation, the country people must have felt that the sun had fittingly marked the greatness of the occasion, when Death ventured to remove the splendid Marquess of Wharton.

His son Philip, a spoilt child of fortune, with the family ability and good looks, was created Duke of Wharton by George I, and then, out of mere perverseness, he intrigued with the exiled court at St. Germains.

He deserted his young wife, and dissipated his great fortune in speculation and foolish extravagance. He sold his Buckinghamshire estates, and his grandfather's fine collection of pictures. He went abroad, dabbled in diplomacy and soldiering, professed himself a Catholic, fought against his countrymen at Gibraltar, and was indicted for high treason. His last three years were spent in rambling about Europe in beggary, drunkenness, and absolute destitution. The doles he received from the Pretender were at once squandered or absorbed by a clamorous rabble of creditors. This English duke died miserably in a Franciscan convent in Spain, in 1731, and Pope drew his portrait in some famous lines :

' Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days ! ' &c.

With the Duke of Wharton's death all his titles became extinct ; of the great house at Upper Winchendon, with its stately gardens and orange-trees, not a vestige remains ; but the Bibles and Catechisms, whose precepts were so flagrantly disregarded, are still given to the children in the name of the ' Good Lord Wharton '.

[1] *Dict. Nat. Biog.* [2] *Verney Memoirs.* [3] Gough MSS.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WHIG AND TORY MARTYRS, LORD RUSSELL AND BISHOP ATTERBURY

ANOTHER great Whig family, contemporary with the Whartons, but with much finer traditions of public duty and of home affection, was that of the Russells of Chenies. When the head of the family settled at Woburn Abbey and became Duke of Bedford, the Russells were chiefly associated with another county, but Bucks still holds their graves. Froude, in his *Short Studies*, describes the Russell chapel at Chenies built in 1556, with its fine series of monuments; for three centuries and a half the Russells have led the way in political and social progress. 'They rose with the Reformation. They furnished a martyr for the Revolution of 1688.' 'To know the lives of the dead Russells is to know English history for twelve generations.'[1]

William Russell, Earl of Bedford, signed the Covenant in 1645, but he retired to Woburn when the old landmarks were being submerged, and Charles I twice visited him there; he is now chiefly remembered as the father of William Lord Russell (1639–1683), 'whom English constitutional history has selected to honour as its chief saint and martyr.'[1] His wife, Rachel Lady Russell, is one of the most beautiful figures in our history. The daughter of the Earl of Southampton, her mother's family, the de Ruvignys, were distinguished French Protestants, and were exiles in England on account of their faith. They were married in 1669. Lady Russell refers to their home life as one of 'sweet and full content'. In 1678 the 'Popish Terror' disturbed all ranks of society, and caused Catherine of Braganza to be undeservedly suspected. Lady Russell writes from town to her husband at Woburn. (Her letters were left at the Brickhill post-office to be called for.) January 1, 1679. 'I ate porridge and partridge with my sister . . . made a dozen visits, and concluded at Whitehall, I learnt nothing there but that the Queen had cried heartily; her eyes made it very visible, yet she was very lively.'

Lord Russell sat long in Parliament as a silent member, and his marriage had brought him such unbroken happiness that neither he nor his wife wished to be involved in the intrigues which filled the last years of Charles II's reign. The king continued to be wonderfully popular, specially with those who knew him only from a distance, and in 1681 High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Buckingham, Wendover, and Marlow vied with each other in swelling 'the glut of loyal addresses' of the most fulsome flattery.

Lord Russell had made a bitter enemy of the Duke of York by his opposition to any Roman Catholic coming to the throne, and when the Rye House Plot broke out in 1683 he was suddenly arrested and tried for high treason. In this dreadful calamity Lady Russell's courage supported his own. She acted as his secretary during his trial, and left nothing undone to save him during the short interval between his sentence and his execution; but she would not counsel him to make any unworthy denial of his principles to save his life, as some friends were urging him to do. Lord Russell depended upon her self-command, and this never failed him; she helped him to part bravely with his children, and when they were gone she remained in the Tower to share his last evening meal, and they talked cheerfully together. At 10 o'clock she left him, he kissed her four or five times; each anxious not to distress the other, they parted in composed silence. He sent her word in the morning that he had slept well, and hoped that she had done the same. He died nobly and patiently in the forty-fourth year of his age. His mother did not long survive him, and it fell to the young widow to care for her father-in-law, her little son, her two daughters, and her sister's motherless children. She devoted herself absolutely to the children's health and upbringing, and but rarely allowed herself any expression of the sorrow she always carried about with her. 'Yet secretly my heart mourns too sadly I fear,'[2] she writes to an old friend, 'and cannot be comforted because I have not the dear companion and sharer of all my joys and sorrows. I want him to talk with, to walk with, to eat and sleep with, all these things are irksome to me now; the day unwelcome, and the night so too; all company and meals I would avoid if it might be.'

THE PARTING OF LORD AND LADY RUSSELL
From the fresco in the Palace of Westminster

A sharp illness of her little boy made her realize that she had still something to lose, and that she had something precious to live for when he grew 'exceedingly better'.

Two years after Lord Russell's execution Charles II died, in February 1685. He was sincerely lamented in Bucks. Some of the country squires were anxious about their mourning, and whether black cloth or crape would be the more correct. They were assured that if they kept at home they might save 'the cost of blacks', as the coronation of the new king would take place within three months; and there were some loyal rejoicings on this occasion.

But James II soon alienated his best friends. He offended the Bucks magistrates by dismissing their popular Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Bridgewater, who, as Lord Brackley, had won the famous election of 1685, and by appointing Jeffreys in his stead. Sir Thomas Tyrrell, Sir Thomas Lee, and Sir Ralph Verney were dismissed from the commission of the peace. Honours were heaped on the hated Jeffreys, now Lord Chancellor. James II and Mary of Modena went to dine with him at Bulstrode Manor, as Charles II had done before, where he was famed for his 'boisterous conviviality' When Jeffreys's son, aged thirteen, and of 'very low stature', was married at Bulstrode to Lady Charlotte Herbert, only daughter of the Earl of Pembroke, '13 years of age and taller than her husband,' the Court and the Privy Council wore their wedding favours.

In the summer of 1688 there were bonfires at Buckingham, and 'great acclamation of the people' on the release of the seven bishops. In October Irish Catholic troops were being marched through Bucks to London, to the great displeasure of the county; there were militia levies at Stony Stratford, and all the Buckingham trained bands were sent off to oppose the landing of the Prince of Orange.[3] The next news from London was of strange confusion, 'King, Queen, and Prince all gone, my Lord Chancellor and the Seal, and a world more gone or going.' There was great excitement in Buckingham when 'a calash dashed through with 2 gentlemen attended by 26 horsemen well armed and mounted', whose blue coats were lined with orange serge—the new colour in English politics;

and smart ladies were ordering orange silk for their petticoats, and wore nothing but orange ribbons. The Lord Chancellor never returned to his Bucks home: he was recognized at Wapping disguised as a sailor, was with difficulty rescued from the mob and lodged in the Tower, where he died in April 1689, and was buried in the next grave to Monmouth's.

The Journal of Mr. Butterfield, Rector of Middle Claydon, shows how hardly the Bucks clergy were put to it to maintain the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance which they had been zealously preaching since the Restoration; it was difficult to obey 'Nero' when Nero was so bent on running away, but on the whole they shared the satisfaction of the laity in the Revolution.[2]

With better prospects of toleration the Quakers this winter opened their new meeting-house at Jordans, destined to be so famous.

When the Convention met to offer the crown to William and Mary, Bucks again sent up all her stalwarts, most of whom, or their fathers, had fought for liberty in the Long Parliament. Among them was Sir William Scawen of Horton, three times M.P. for Bucks, a great merchant, and governor of the Bank of England. He emerged from his retirement to put his money, and his experience on ''Change', at the service of the new sovereigns.

In 1699 William III gave a large field at Boarstall, for the poor of Oakley and Brill, known as Poor Folk's Pasture.

Lady Russell had kept up an intimate correspondence with the Prince and Princess of Orange, whose respect for her was well known, and her influence was now sought by those who wished to stand well with the Court. One of the first acts of the new reign was to reverse the attainder of William Lord Russell; his father was made Duke of Bedford, his son became Marquess of Tavistock. Rachel Lady Russell saw her husband vindicated and his cause triumphant. She welcomed the friendship of Queen Mary for her married daughters, for herself she had nothing to ask. She had a great respect for William III, and when he died it was said that a letter from Lady Russell was found in his pocket.

THE ACCESSION OF WILLIAM AND MARY
From the fresco in the Palace of Westminster

Lady Russell lived to see her children's children and grandchildren, and retained her health and memory to her eighty-seventh year. There is a homely touch in a letter of hers in 1718: 'Evening is creeping upon me, by the side of a grandchild, who was willing to take her dinner with me, her sister having taken physic, and she not loving boiled chicken.'

With her bright faith and long experience, she was the adviser and comforter of many. She was consulted as to the policy the Princess Anne should pursue at the time of her father's overthrow; in family disagreements, especially between married couples, she was constantly implored to come and make peace. When the young heiress of East Claydon, Molly Verney, made a runaway match, it was Lady Russell who was appealed to, to persuade her grandfather, Sir Ralph Verney, to forgive the culprit, and his last illness was brightened by her sympathy and prayers.

Lady Russell had lived under five kings, two queens, and Oliver Cromwell; she died in 1723 on a day she had always kept sacred, her husband's birthday, September 29, and she was laid beside him in the chapel at Chenies.

Among the local occurrences of 1693 is noted the accidental drowning of Dr. Lewis Atterbury, on his journey home from London to Milton-Keynes, where he had been rector since 1657. An able man himself, he was the father of the famous Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester (1662–1732), one of the most prominent of the Church of England divines at the close of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century, who took the opposite side to the Russells in the great controversies of the day, and, like them, suffered severely for his opinions.

Born at the Rectory of Milton-Keynes and educated at Westminster, he had a brilliant career at Christ Church, and became one of the foremost preachers and controversialists of the High Church and Tory party. Atterbury was a great favourite with both the Stuart queens, Mary and Anne; he had a commanding figure and a graceful delivery. He became Dean of Carlisle and of Christ Church, then Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster; he was a champion of the rights of the

clergy in convocation, and a great debater and orator in the House of Lords.

He officiated at the coronation of George I, but his heart was with the Stuarts; and in 1720 he was arrested and accused of favouring a Jacobite rising. He was condemned, deprived of his ecclesiastical preferment, and banished in a very arbitrary manner, and in 1723 he left England never to return.

He wrote to Pope from the Tower, bravely quoting his friend's fine lines :[4]

'Some natural tears he dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before him where to choose
His place of rest, and Providence his guide.'

His life abroad was a sad one. James was a master difficult to serve; and, less happy than Lord Russell, Atterbury lost a wife who was 'the inspiration of his youth and the solace of his riper years' in the very crisis of his troubles. He died in France in 1732, and was privately buried in Westminster Abbey.

Bishop Atterbury was an enthusiast when art, literature, and theology were sinking into the cold correctness of the Georgian period. His successor at Christ Church and Carlisle said of him, 'Atterbury comes first and sets everything on fire, and I follow him with a bucket of water.'[4] What his friend said in jest was literally true of his political career: the Stuarts managed to extinguish every effort made to reinstate them; it was a hard fate for so clever a man and so devoted a Jacobite.

There were a few families in Bucks who sympathized with Atterbury's opinions. Thomas Phillips, of Ickford, lost a property in the county under his grandfather's will, by his devotion to the Roman Catholic faith. He became a Jesuit for a time, and obtained some foreign preferment through the influence of Prince Charles Edward. He wrote a life of Cardinal Pole, famous in its day; he died at Liège in 1774. His sister Elizabeth was abbess of the Benedictine nuns at Ghent.

Another notable Jacobite was Mrs. Jane Symes, one of the Andrewes of Lathbury, who had acquired the manor in 1599. Her father was high sheriff in 1706, and a friend of

Browne Willis. As a young girl, her presence of mind had saved their Catholic neighbour, Sir Robert Throckmorton, from arrest, in the rebellion of 1715. Hearing that her father was required to search Sir Robert's house for arms, she ordered his carriage, hurried over to Weston Underwood, persuaded Sir Robert to give up to her his arms and whatever could compromise him, and concealed these things at Lathbury till the danger was overpast. She left the county for some years as the wife of a Somersetshire rector, with whose views in later life she disagreed; but she had returned to Bucks on the death of Mr. Andrewes. Mrs. Symes had been a year in possession of Lathbury House and of Lathbury Bridge, an important passage of the Ouse, when the Duke of Cumberland appeared with his army, in 1745, marching against Prince Charlie. The soldiers were quartered in the church and in the town of Newport Pagnell, the surrounding fields were full of their artillery and baggage. The Ouse showed Jacobite sympathies, and was in full flood; the mistress of the bridge had locked up its two portals, and in reply to the fierce duke's summons she sent him a bold message that she was in London and had taken the keys with her. The duke tried to get man, woman, or child to declare Lathbury House was held by Papists, that he might have an excuse to blow it up. But Newport Pagnell would not inform against an old neighbour. His soldiers at last broke open the bridge gates, and burnt Mrs. Symes's trees, hedges, and cornfields as they passed through her domain; but she had at least the satisfaction of knowing that she had delayed the British army for an hour and a quarter on its way to quench the last Jacobite hope in the blood of Culloden Moor.

[1] Froude's *Short Studies.*
[2] *Verney Memoirs.*
[3] Lady Russell's Letters.
[4] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

CHAPTER XIX

THOMAS GRAY AND WILLIAM COWPER, THE POETS OF SOUTH BUCKS AND NORTH BUCKS

In Gray and Cowper we have two men, both amateurs of poetry rather than professional poets, neither of them a native of Bucks, but both finding their most inspiring subjects in the county; Gray in the south, at Eton and Stoke Poges; Cowper in the north, at Olney and Weston Underwood. It is a happy combination, of which any county might be proud. Their poetry was absolutely different; Gray's verse was as restrained and compact as Cowper's was diffuse and expansive. Both were scholars and lovers of nature, content to study and describe what was actually before them; wherein they differed from the highly artificial and courtly school of Pope and his imitators. Gray found material enough for his immortal elegy in the 'ivy-mantled tower' of a village church and its graveyard; Cowper, in the slow, winding river, and the broad street of a small market-town.

Thomas Gray was born in London in 1716, and was, like Milton, the son of a scrivener. He was educated at Eton, and in his 'Ode to Eton College' he described, in after years, with the affection of a true Etonian, the joys of the playing-fields, and the river, and the 'earnest business' of lessons 'that bring constraint, to sweeten liberty':

> 'The thoughtless day, the easy night,
> The spirits pure, the slumbers light
> That fly th' approach of morn.'

The strenuous games of cricket and football were shortly to come in, but the Eton of Gray's time was content with marbles, a hoop, and a ball, as he puts it poetically:

> 'To chase the rolling circle's speed,
> Or urge the flying ball.'

Gray was less happy at Cambridge, though alive to all the historical interests of the place. His fair complexion and refined, fastidious tastes won him the nickname of

'Miss Gray'. He only wished to learn what he wanted to know, and not what the authorities desired to teach him.

He had made friends with Horace Walpole at Eton, and Walpole invited him to journey with him as his companion through France and Italy. Their characters and fortunes were ill-matched, and they had a difference of opinion at Florence. 'Part they did,' is Dr. Johnson's trenchant comment, 'whatever was the quarrel, and the rest of their travels was doubtless more unpleasant to them both.' On Gray's return home in 1741 he lost his father, who had dissipated his fortune, and Gray, who never cared for money, was now reduced to a very modest income. He was much at Cambridge, and went on studying, for his own satisfaction, languages, literature, and natural history; but his happiest days were at Stoke Poges. He had passed his vacations there, as an undergraduate, with his aunt, Mrs. Rogers. His widowed mother now settled herself at Stoke with her sister, Mrs. Antrobus, at West End Cottage, 'a compact box of red brick, with sash windows,' Gray called it, and it was here, while living with the two gentle ladies, that his best work was done. Gray's travelling companion and contemporary, Horace Walpole, as the son of a great Prime Minister, was in touch with all the fashionable and literary people of the day, and we are indebted to him for an intimate knowledge of those circles during the Georgian era. He had made it up with Gray, whose writings he commended to his many genteel friends. Gray, on his side, wrote a graceful little ode on the death of Walpole's cat, 'Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes.'

About 1750, the 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' was handed about in manuscript, and brought the author a pleasant friendship with Lady Cobham. Not far from Stoke Poges Churchyard stood an old Elizabethan manor-house, beautiful and interesting enough to inspire any poet's enthusiasm. In the early Middle Ages an heiress, Amicia de Stoke, had carried the property to Robert Poges, and the house had rolled up its historical memories century after century. It was full of dark turns and unexpected corners, of

> 'Rich windows that exclude the light
> And passages that lead to nothing.'

The Lord Keeper, Sir Christopher Hatton, whose dancing Queen Elizabeth so much admired, had owned the house and led the revels in it :

> ' His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
> His high crown'd hat and satin doublet,
> Moved the stout heart of England's Queen
> Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.'

Another owner was Sir Edward Coke, Attorney-General, who spent at Stoke a miserable old age, ' alone on earth, suspected by his king, deserted by his friends, and detested by his wife.' Here Charles I had been brought as a prisoner in 1647, and at this door William III had been refused admittance by its stanch Jacobite owner, Robert Gayer. This wonderful house was in possession of Viscountess Cobham, who, having read the Elegy written by her near neighbour at the Cottage, earnestly desired to make his acquaintance. Two ladies who were her guests went out to find him, and the poet wrote a delightfully whimsical account of it all in the ' Long Story '. In a mock-heroic style he sketches the old house, with the portraits of the old ' Lady Janes and Joans ' looking down from the gallery

> ' In peakéd hoods, and mantles tarnished,
> Sour visages enough to scare ye,
> High dames of honour once that garnished
> The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary.'

He tells how ' a wicked imp they call a poet ' was hunted down, caught, and dragged into the lady's presence ; how he protested he was neither a poacher nor a rifler of hen-roost or dairy ; and then comes the pleasant climax :

> ' My Lady rose, and with a grace
> She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.'

The instant success of the Elegy justified Lady Cobham's discernment ; it ran through eleven editions, and in 1757 Gray was offered, and declined, the post of Poet Laureate. In 1768 he was made Professor of Languages and History at Cambridge, an unsolicited honour he greatly appreciated, though failing health constantly interfered with his duties.

He had by this time lost the two who made his home; he described Dorothy Gray in her epitaph as 'the careful, tender mother of many children, of whom one alone has the misfortune to survive her'.

In striking contrast to Gray's quiet, studious life, Horace Walpole was laboriously playing at being young and sprightly in another part of the county. In June 1770 Walpole met the Princess Amelia, daughter of George II, at Stowe, where she was being entertained by Earl Temple, and wrote a lively account of it. 'A Princess at the head of a small set for five days together did not promise well. However, she was very good-humoured and easy, Lady Temple is good-nature itself, my Lord was very civil . . . and I happened to be in such good spirits and took such care to avoid politics, that we laughed a good deal.' Walpole describes the long-drawn-out meals (Princess Amelia had the vast family appetite); the fishing in the park, the walks in the stately gardens, with visits to the Temple of Friendship, the Temple of Janus, and to the Doric Arch which Lord Temple had built in memory of a former visit of the princess's, with her name on one side and a medallion portrait on the other. He describes the beautiful landscape seen through it, and 'the over-bowering trees'. 'Between the flattery and the prospect, the Princess was really in Elysium; she visited her arch 4 or 5 times a day and could not satiate herself with it.' He winds up with the account of a very characteristic evening party, in which the thickets and lake at Stowe were lit up to imitate the famous gardens of Vauxhall. 'With a little exaggeration I could make you believe that nothing was so delightful . . . but the evening was more than cool, and the destined spot anything but dry. There were not half lamps enough and no music but an ancient militia-man, who played cruelly on a squeaking tabor and pipe. As our procession descended the vast flight of steps into the garden, in which was assembled a crowd of people from Buckingham and the villages, to see the Princess and the show, the moon shining very bright, I could not help laughing as I surveyed our troop, which, instead of tripping lightly to such an Arcadian entertainment, were hobbling down by the balustrades wrapped up in cloaks and great coats for fear

of catching cold. The Earl you know is bent double, the Countess very lame; I am a miserable walker, and the Princess, though as strong as a Brunswick lion, makes no figure going down fifty steps. Except Lady Anne, and by courtesy Lady Mary, we were none of us young enough for a pastoral.'

In the church at Upton, which has disputed with Stoke Poges the honour of being the original scene of Gray's Elegy, is the tombstone of an old Bucks lady—'Sarah Bramstone of Eton, Spinster, a person who dared to be just in the reign of George II.' Imagination falters before the figure of this maiden lady writing her own epitaph, wrapped round with the cardinal virtues. But when we realize the artificial standards that prevailed in life and art, we may be thankful that Gray dared to be simple 'in the reign of George II'. He lived on into that of George III, and died in the fifty-fifth year of his age, in 1771. He was buried at Stoke Poges beside his mother.

Gray's old house is now called Stoke Court, and is the home of Mr. Henry Allhusen, who has kindly given the following information: The present house consists of West End Cottage, with additions made by Mr. John Penn in 1840, Mr. Darby in 1860, and by the grandfather of the present owner in 1871. Through all these changes many of the old rooms preserve their original shape, and tradition points to one as the poet's own room. An avenue of trees along 'Gray's Walk' leads to an old summer-house on rising ground, whence he could see the 'distant prospect of Eton College'.

The Manor House of the 'Long Story' is now in the hands of a new owner, who is once more building it up. A sort of vestibule or short cloister remains on the north side of the church, by which the former owners of the manor had private access to their great pew. At the death of Lady Cobham, in 1760, the house was sold to Thomas Penn, second son of William Penn of Pennsylvania. His son John pulled down the greater part of it, and Wyatt erected for him a pretentious classical house, known as Stoke Park, and now used as a golf club. Quaint stories are told of John Penn, a confirmed bachelor, whose dislike of women was such, that his attached old housekeeper took

his orders standing behind his back, where he could not see her.

He had at least a real love for Gray, and put up, with the best intentions, a huge 'tea-caddy' sarcophagus to his memory. The lovely meadow outside the churchyard, in which it stands, recalls a verse that has somehow dropped out at the end of Gray's Elegy:

'There scattered oft, the earliest of the year
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found,
The red-breast loves to build and warble here
And little footsteps lightly print the ground.'

We turn to his younger contemporary, the poet of North Bucks, and find the two men, with great differences of temperament, had many tastes in common.

William Cowper was the eldest son of the Rector of Berkhamstead, Dr. John Cowper, chaplain to George II. His mother was Anne Donne, a descendant of the poet and divine, who was Dean of St. Paul's in the reign of James I. Born in 1731, over the border in Hertfordshire, the chief work of his life was done in North Bucks, and his name will always be connected with Olney. He was a lovable, shy, and delicate child, and his very happy home was broken up by the death of his mother before he was six years old.

Fifty years afterwards he was given her picture, and the sight of his mother's sweet face brought back to him most vividly the unforgotten incidents of his childhood at the Rectory. The scarlet cloak in which the gardener Robin drew him to school along the public way; the visits his mother paid him after he had been tucked up in bed; her smile, her kisses, the pretty embroidery she used to make; and then the desolate day of her funeral. He remembered how he watched the black procession,

'And turning from my nursery window drew
A long long sigh and breathed a last adieu';

how the maids promised that his mother would soon return, and how he went on hoping and being disappointed—

'Till all my stock of infant sorrow spent
I learnt at last submission to my lot,
And though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.'

Cowper's 'Lines on his Mother's Picture' all English children should know and love.

After an unhappy time at a private boarding-school, he went to Westminster, to which many members of Parliament sent their sons, and where he made friends with men who were afterwards famous and in great positions. He played in the shadow of the Abbey, and was good at the new games of cricket and football. A harmless, gentle boy, he was well liked, but no one suspected that Cowper's name would be remembered when his brilliant schoolfellows were almost all forgotten.

After this he worked in a lawyer's office, but he had neither good health, good spirits, nor any steady industry to make dull work tolerable. His brightest hours were spent at the house of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, with his charming cousins, Harriet and Theodora, who were merry girls, and very good to him. When his apprenticeship was over he did not make money enough to support himself at the Bar; he was thriftless and listless, and tormented by gloomy thoughts and bilious attacks.

Suddenly into this aimless existence fell a piece of good fortune—Cowper was offered, by a relation, the place of Clerk to the Journals of the House of Lords. It was work to suit him, and well paid, but Cowper's happiness in the prospect was at once dashed to the ground, when he heard that he 'was bid to expect an examination at the bar of the House, touching his sufficiency for the post he had taken'. He worked himself up into such an agony of nervous terror, increased by the feeling of the ingratitude he was showing to the man who had appointed him, that his mind gave way; he attempted suicide, then had a dreadful time of self-reproach and of religious depression.

His friends naturally thought that he had missed the chance of his lifetime, and that he would never be more than a hopeless and useless invalid; but they were mistaken. Cowper 'did more than get well'—his outlook on life was changed, a deep religious faith 'took the place of his anguish and despair'.[1] He left London for Huntingdon, and there made the friendship with the Unwin family, which had the most blessed influence on his future. Mrs. Unwin was a calm, strong character, well read, delightful

WILLIAM COWPER

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery attributed to Romney

in conversation, and, as Cowper said, 'more polite than a duchess.' She was mother and friend to the gentle, much-tried soul, 'from whom she wanted nothing but the tranquil companionship which was his happiness.'[1] After Mr. Unwin's death 'the widow and her harmless lodger' went to Olney to be near the Rev. John Newton, 'a man of strong character and ceaseless activity, whose own life had gone through all sorts of violent changes, and who was now preaching and teaching among the lace-makers and straw-plaiters of North Bucks.' Cowper became a kind of lay-curate to Newton, visiting the sick and dying, conducting prayer-meetings, writing for Newton's collection of Olney Hymns, and wearing himself out in the most exhausting work. He loved the poor and was a comforter of many, but his health broke down again, and only Mrs. Unwin's devoted nursing restored him to life and reason. After this Cowper recognized the need of a quiet routine. He lived out of doors, gardening, keeping tame animals, carpentering, taking long walks, enjoying the meadows and trees and the lazy meandering Ouse. Mrs. Unwin, on the look out for anything to occupy her invalid, encouaged him to write poetry. But it was a livelier influence, that of Lady Austen, a widow who came to live in Olney, which first stirred the poet of fifty to put forth his real powers of wit and wisdom. Lady Austen told him the story of John Gilpin's ride, and he wrote in one night the poem that made all England shake with laughter. She commanded him to write about her sofa, and in 'The Task' he gave the most charming description of an English home at tea-time, the curtains drawn, the bubbling urn, the pleasant familiar talk of the family. 'Up to this time no one had ventured to make the fireside heroic, or set it in front of all that is happy and beautiful.'[1]

Cowper woke up to find himself famous on the publication of 'The Task'. Letters poured in from old friends and schoolfellows, and from new readers delighting in his poems.

This sympathy was very good for him, and in an unusual burst of high spirits he wrote: 'It is a noble thing to be a poet; it makes all the world so lively. I might have preached more sermons than even Tillotson did, and better,

and the world would have been still fast asleep; but a volume of verse is a fiddle that puts the universe in motion.'

His love of Nature, his sympathy with the people, his happiness in small pleasures, and the trouble he took in his poems to share these with others, and to illustrate the beauty of common things, made a new departure in English literature. It was a saying of his, 'that a letter may be written upon anything or nothing just as that anything or nothing may occur.'

Whether he described the postman blowing his horn, and clattering with his muddy horse up the long street of Olney; or the pious old woman working at her lace-pillow; or just his usual winter walk, he was studying from Nature. 'He saw with eyes as clear as truth itself what was before him in the soft, fresh, outside world . . . he was bold to say what was in him, and to say it in his own way.'

Another woman, Harriet, Lady Hesketh, one of the cousins who had made merry with him as a youth, greatly cheered his later years. She removed the poet and Mrs. Unwin from Olney to a better house in the adjacent parish of Weston Underwood belonging to Mr. Throckmorton, where for a time he was very happy, 'near to our most agreeable landlord, and his agreeable pleasure grounds.' 'I am going to tell you a secret,' he wrote thence to Lady Hesketh, 'a great secret, that you must not whisper even to your cat. I am making a new translation of Homer.' This was his task at Weston, but it was much less congenial to him than his own local subjects, and took up all his leisure. 'He who has Homer to transcribe,' he writes in a mock-heroic vein, 'may well be contented to do little else. As when an ass being harnessed with ropes to a sand-cart, drags with hanging ears his heavy burthen, neither filling the long echoing streets with his harmonious bray, nor throwing up his heels behind, frolicsome and airy, as asses less engaged are wont to do—so I seldom allow myself those pretty little vagaries, of which I intend hereafter to enjoy my fill.'

Shy and nervous as he was, Cowper kept in touch with public events in his retirement, and the influence of his

writings was considerable. His advocacy was sought for the abolition of slavery, or when any oppression was to be brought to light. His description of the Bastille was quoted by Fox in Parliament; he had a passionate love of liberty, religious, political, and personal, and his definition of the relations between the King of England and his subjects is admirable for its good sense and balance :—

> 'We love
> The King, who loves the law, respects his bounds,
> And reigns content within them: him we serve
> Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:
> T' administer, to guard, t' adorn the state
> But not to warp or change it. We are his
> To serve him nobly in the common cause,
> True to the death, but not to be his slaves.'

His wide sympathies made him an earnest friend of peace, and his are the famous lines :—

> 'But War's a game, which were their subjects wise
> Kings would not play at.'

Gray, in his reflections on the life and death of the Bucks labourers, perceived how much power and genius ran to waste for lack of education and opportunity :—

> 'Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd
> Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre;'

but he also saw their 'homely joys' and compensations, and expected men's 'sober wishes' never to soar above their 'destiny obscure'. Cowper's generation had been shown by the stern lessons of the French Revolution, that the toilers might not for ever submit to drudgery, hunger, and ignorance, but might claim—and with violence—a share in the higher inheritance of the race.

During Cowper's lifetime, two working-men in Bucks managed to rise above their circumstances; education would have helped to discipline the spasmodic energies of the one, and to smooth the needlessly arduous path of the other.

James Andrews (1734–1817) was a stonecutter at Olney, fashioning such old gravestones 'with uncouth rhymes,

and shapeless sculpture decked', as Gray was fond of deciphering in his country churchyard. But tiring of cherubs' heads, scythes, and hour-glasses, Andrews took up wood-carving and wood-engraving, with much success.[2] From a log of wood of 'Shakespeare's Mulberry Tree' he sculptured a bust of the poet, esteemed 'no mean likeness'[2]; he painted pictures or made a pair of boots with equal facility. He then turned his attention to making musical instruments, telescopes, and microscopes, even learning to polish the lenses. Andrews carried on his experiments to the age of 83.

George Anderson of Weston Turville (1760–1796), whose intense concentration of mind was a striking contrast to Andrews' versatility, was born in 'chill penury's' lowest grade. Losing his father, he went out to field work as a child, with only such a smattering of elementary arithmetic as an elder brother contrived to give him.[2] A born mathematician, he thought in figures during his working hours, and scraped together such knowledge as he could get in his scanty leisure. At seventeen he saw some problems set in the *London Magazine*, solved them, and sent the answers with his village address. This led to the discovery of his genius: he was found threshing in a barn, whose walls were covered with triangles and parallelograms.

He was too shy to wish for notice, but Dr. King, Vicar of Whitchurch, insisted upon sending him to Oxford, where he took his M.A. degree at Wadham College. After this, Dr. King's brother-in-law, Scrope Bernard, Esq., M.P., had him up to London; he found work in the India Board of Control, and by his remarkable talent and industry rose to be their Accountant-General. While preparing the complicated accounts for the Indian budget of 1796, Anderson was seized with sudden illness and died, aged thirty-six.

Four years later the Poet of Olney was taken.

On the horizon of Cowper's life the clouds had gathered again. Mrs. Unwin died, and he sank into silence and melancholy till death released him in 1800; but the gentle spirit had given its message to the world, and that endures.

[1] Mrs. Oliphant, *Literary History of the Nineteenth Century.*
[2] Gough MSS.

CHAPTER XX

'WHEN GEORGE III WAS KING'

WHEN the young King George III came to the throne the long duel with France for supremacy in the East and West was coming to a victorious end. India was ours, and Canada; and it was at Clieveden in Bucks, then the house of his father, Frederick, Prince of Wales, that Dr. Arne's famous patriotic song 'Rule Britannia' was first heard in public in 1763, when the nation was proud of all these conquests. During the first part of the reign the attention of England was engrossed with constitutional questions at home, until France again rudely challenged Britannia's right to rule the waves, and the protracted struggle began again which only ended at Waterloo. Through these sixty eventful years King George, with all his mistakes, never lost the affection of his people.

His moderate abilities had received only the narrowest education, and he ascended the throne with lofty ideas of what was due to the Patriot King. Though his home life was a model of simplicity and he was content himself to sup off water-gruel, he lavished immense sums in controlling elections and corrupting members, till he had formed in Parliament a mercenary party, known as the King's Friends, 'as if (as was said at the time) the body of the people were the King's Enemies.'

George III and Queen Charlotte were always kind to the Eton boys, and his birthday, the 4th of June, continues to be their Speech Day. Their good-natured, homely figures were well known in that neighbourhood; and at Stowe the Queen's Temple was built in Queen Charlotte's honour. As Thackeray puts it—'Rain or shine the king rode every day for hours, poked his kindly red face into hundreds of cottages round about, and showed that shovel-hat and Windsor uniform to farmers, to pig-boys, to old women making apple-dumplings, to all sorts of people, gentle and simple. Our fathers read of these things with pleasure, laughed at the king's small jokes; liked the old man who

lived on plain roast and boiled; who despised your French kickshaws; who was a true hearty old English gentleman.'[1]

Lord Rosebery, in his lecture on the Political Aspect of Buckinghamshire, has given us a splendid picture of the part played by the county in the political drama. 'The great epoch of Bucks,' says Lord Rosebery, 'was the eighteenth century. . . . I claim for Bucks that she is the most famous of English counties in the field of politics during that period. . . . It is, I think, safe to say that there were more political combinations hatched in Bucks during the eighteenth century than in all the rest of England, except London and Bath. Why was this? The reason seems to lie in the Palace of Stowe and its inhabitants—Lord Cobham and the great house of Grenville. . . . Stowe and the Temples and the Grenvilles represent a race rooted in the county for centuries, a race which long controlled the county, and at one time threatened to absorb it. This political power began under the fostering influence of Lord Cobham, who was not only a politician but a field-marshal, and at Stowe were gathered that remarkable group known as the Cobham Cousins, Grenvilles, Lytteltons, and Pitts. . . . This powerful combination composed of one man of genius and several men of ability, all more or less impracticable, might have governed the country for a generation had they only been able to agree. That, however, was obviously out of the question; and the Temple of Friendship reared by Lord Cobham to contain the busts of his friends had, long before it was finished, survived its purpose and meaning. But it was not one group of men that embodied the political power of the dynasty of Stowe, for it continued through long generations. There was the generation of Lord Cobham, then that of Temple, George Grenville, and Pitt, brothers and brothers-in-law, constantly at variance, constantly endeavouring to patch up a formidable and fraternal peace.'[2]

The great Grenville epoch of the history of England lasted for more than a century—'during the whole of that time there had been a Grenville finger in every political pie. During the whole of that time Stowe had been a political fortress or ambuscade, watched vigilantly by every political party; the influence of Stowe had been one which the most

powerful minister could not afford to ignore; and the owner of Stowe had been the hereditary chief of a political group. Tons of correspondence survive to show the activity and power of that combination.

And the temple in which all this power was concentrated was worthy of its trust. Its magnificent avenue, its stately but not overwhelming proportions, its princely rooms of reception, its gardens, its grottoes, its shrines, still breathe the perfume of the eighteenth century. In its superb saloons we seem to expect brocades and periwigs and courtly swords; we seem to see the long procession of illustrious ghosts that in life were the favoured guests of the house—Pope, and Thomson, and Glover, Vanbrugh and Chesterfield, Pitt plighting his troth to his Hester, Horace Walpole, and a world of princes—an unrivalled succession of curious and admiring visitors from all parts of England and Europe. The house has lost its priceless collections, but no atom of its unpurchasable charm. Bare, but still beautiful, Stowe remains the central glory of Buckinghamshire.'[2]

George Grenville (the second son of Richard Grenville, of Wotton, and Hester Temple, the heiress of Stowe), M.P. for Buckingham, succeeded Lord Bute as Prime Minister in 1763; he was an able financier and administrator, and at once devoted himself to the task of devising fresh taxes, among others the famous Stamp Act, the first beginning of trouble with our American colonies.

Lord Shelburne, afterwards Marquess of Lansdowne, who lived just outside the town of Wycombe, was a famous politician in the opposite camp. He advocated conciliation of the American colonists, but he was distrusted by his colleagues, and hated by George III; he was Prime Minister for a short time in 1783. He was a cultivated man and a patron of literature and art. Dr. Johnson used to stay with him. Lord Shelburne has left an amusing account of the political anxiety that Wycombe gave him. 'Family boroughs,' he said, 'cost much, by what I call insensible perspiration . . . it consists in paying a little, commonly a great deal too much, on every article . . . the rents of houses and lands must be governed by the moderation of voters. You must be forthcoming on every occasion not only of distress but of fancy, to subscribe too largely to roads; to get livings

and favours of all sorts from Government, without mentioning a great deal of obscure hospitality, and a never-ceasing management of men and things. And after all, when the crisis comes, you are liable to be outbid by any nabob or adventurer. What can you say to a blacksmith who has seven children, or to a common labouring-man who is offered £700 for his vote, or two misers who are offered £2,000, which are instances distinctly on record at Wycombe?'

Lord Shelburne's house, then known as Loakes Manor, was sold in 1790 to Lord Carrington, who often received William Pitt there. The house was rebuilt and called Wycombe Abbey. About 1896 it was sold by the present Earl Carrington, the grandson of Shelburne's friend, to the Girls' Education Co., and under its famous head mistress, Miss J. F. Dove, M.A., the school has led the way in the Higher Education of Girls. Three prime ministers, besides Pitt, have stayed at Wycombe Abbey; Disraeli in 1848, Gladstone in 1876, and the Earl of Rosebery in 1884.

The leader of the Whig opposition in North Bucks was Ralph Verney, of Claydon, Earl Verney in the Peerage of Ireland. His family had a long political connexion with the county, and he fought many bitterly contested elections against the Grenvilles. He early recognized Edmund Burke's ability, and gave him his first seat in Parliament for Wendover, as he had already given William Burke a seat at Great Bedwin. A Fellow of the Royal Society, he took much interest in the scientific improvement of agriculture, and Burke wrote that no man in England had been 'so indulgent, humane, and moderate a landlord on an estate of considerable extent or a greater protector to all the poor within his reach'. Lord Verney was a man of artistic taste and generous instincts; he lent lavishly to his friends, and began to rebuild Claydon House on a magnificent scale from the designs of Adam. 'Three beautiful rooms and a broad marqueterie staircase remain, but his niece and successor pulled down the rest of the new wing, unfinished at his death.'

Many stories are told of his hospitalities and extravagances; of his patronage of literature; of his black servants with silver trumpets; of his debts and losses; and in 1784 the attention of the whole country was fixed upon

GEORGE GRENVILLE

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

the Bucks election contest between Stowe and Claydon. Cowper, in his 'snug parlour' at Olney, described in one of his charming letters how he was canvassed by the Tory candidate; how 'a mob appeared before the window, a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys hallo'd, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville'. How Cowper assured him that he had no vote, and Mr. Grenville civilly replied that he had a great deal of influence; how in a moment the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour were filled with people; how they frightened Puss, the tame hare; how relieved the poet felt when 'the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers withdrew', although he was allowed to be 'very young, genteel, and handsome'. The polling lasted sixteen days and Verney was defeated by twenty-four votes. After this came a financial crash, but while his trustees and lawyers were anxiously considering how small a pittance their magnificent client could live upon, another general election burst upon the country: 'the clamour for the popular candidate drowned all other cries; Lord Verney's agent wrote that he would try to limit his expenses to £12,000 or £15,000 (June 1790). Processions carrying his banners converged on Aylesbury from all the neighbouring districts, two hundred gentlemen breakfasted at Claydon House, "three hundred of the meaner sort" were fed with the remnants of the meal; he was triumphantly returned, and the county rang with his praises.'

Edmund Burke (1729–1797), though by birth an Irishman, was intimately bound up with the county history; even when his parliamentary connexion was transferred from Wendover to Bristol he made his home here, and bought the estate of Gregories (now Butlers Court) in the parishes of Penn and Beaconsfield. Himself one of the great masters of English, he loved the place the better because it was associated with the poet Edmund Waller, who occupied the house called Hall Barn; and he would take his guests to see Waller's Oak, and his grave with its fantastic little pyramid under the great walnut tree, in Beaconsfield Churchyard. Hall Barn has been rebuilt and enlarged, and is now the home of Lord Burnham. At Gregories Burke entertained a succession of interesting guests, and in his 'assiduous protection of neglected worth'

sheltered George Crabbe, at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, treated him as a member of his family, and enabled a famished apothecary to become a good clergyman and a popular poet. One of Burke's chief friends was Sir Joshua Reynolds. The great painter had received a commission from the Empress Catherine of Russia, and he was thinking over a subject in which the Infant Hercules should be strangling a brace of serpents. On arriving at Beaconsfield he saw a splendid little boy, named Rolfe, playing on Burke's lawn and at once made a study of him as Hercules. The child justified the name given him in 1786, and lived on as a portly farmer till 1850. As a Whig, Burke intensely disliked the policy of the Grenvilles, but they were personal friends, and there is a pleasant story of his writing one of his famous pamphlets at Claydon, and going with Lord Verney to Stowe, to talk it over with 'their friend the enemy'. After Burke's great speeches in the House of Commons and in Westminster Hall he loved nothing so well as to return to 'the calm shades of Beaconsfield, where he would with his own hands give food to a starving beggar, or medicine to a peasant sick of the ague, where he would talk of the weather, the turnips, and the hay with the team-men and the farm bailiff, and where in the evening stillness, he would pace the walk under the trees, and reflect on the state of Europe and the distractions of his country'.[3] In July 1797 Canning wrote to a friend, 'There is but one event, but that is an event for the world—Burke is dead.'

To complete the dramatis personae of county politicians we must include John Wilkes (whom the other actors would have called the villain of the piece), as he was closely connected with Aylesbury. The son of a wealthy distiller at Leighton Buzzard, he was educated at Aylesbury, at the school of Mr. Leeson, a Presbyterian minister, and it was at Aylesbury that at the age of twenty-two he met and married a mature heiress, Miss Mead, and there his only child was born. They lived at the Prebendal House, and he put up a tablet in the churchyard wall to William Smart his gardener. Wilkes was high sheriff for Bucks, and afterwards member for Aylesbury. His local reputation was bad; he had never returned his wife's affection, and after some unhappy years they were separated, he keeping and squandering the

Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

EDMUND BURKE

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

greater part of her fortune. He joined a club of wild young men of fashion at Medmenham, to whom all sorts of blasphemous and wicked practices were imputed, and as scandal loses nothing in the telling, Wilkes was looked upon as a wholly vicious and dangerous man. His singularly ugly face and his squint lent themselves to horrible caricatures; and he was as much hated in good society as King George was beloved, yet by the irony of fate, Wilkes became 'unwittingly the chief instrument in bringing about some of the greatest advances the constitution ever made'. The king's conscientious obstinacy and Grenville's finance lost us our American colonies, and their attempt to crush the member for Aylesbury made 'Wilkes and Liberty' the accepted war-cry of reform all over the country.

At that time what we mean by a newspaper was unknown, and parliamentary debates were private. Wilkes had started a paper called the *North Briton*, written with great ability, and in the forty-fifth number he made a violent attack on the king's speech in opening Parliament, which he called 'the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever launched upon mankind'. The court chose to take this not as a charge against ministers, but as a personal attack upon the king himself. As the paper was anonymous, a general warrant was issued against the whole staff of writers and printers, Wilkes was arrested and imprisoned and a search-warrant was issued to seize his private papers.

The law-courts decided that all these three courses were illegal. The member for Aylesbury had to be released, and he republished the obnoxious forty-fifth number of the *North Briton*, the name of which became a household word.

The House of Commons then expelled and outlawed Wilkes, who went abroad. These high-handed proceedings brought about the fall of the Grenville Ministry. The Whig Ministry of Lord Rockingham, which succeeded, was inspired by Edmund Burke, who was the Prime Minister's secretary; by the intrigues of the king's friends they soon fell, but they had abolished general warrants. Wilkes then returned from abroad, was elected for Middlesex, and petitioned for the reversal of his outlawry. Except for the king's personal animosity this might have been granted, but Wilkes was

imprisoned, expelled again for the old offences, re-elected, and expelled once more. After a long fight in which Wilkes stood for the liberty of newspaper reporting, as well as for the liberty of electors to choose their own representatives, he was made an alderman of the city of London, and later Lord Mayor, and having defied the summons of the House of Commons to appear at the Bar, he finally triumphed, and sat as member for Middlesex for many years.

His struggles with the Government were keenly followed both by friends and foes in Aylesbury. He was an *ex-officio* trustee of the grammar school, and one of his libellers compared him in a song to the Dragon of Wantley :—

> 'But the Aylesbury men like fools,
> Thought John Wilkes a greater rarity ;
> They made him Trustee of the Schools
> And he swallow'd up the Charity.'

His persecutions had drawn out much sympathy on both sides of the Atlantic, his friends paid his debts amounting to £17,000, but he had a genius for contracting fresh ones ; he became a popular idol, and his portraits were sold everywhere. Wilkes had fine manners and much wit and humour ; his tender affection for his daughter was the best part of his character. 'He died as he had lived, insolvent.' An obelisk in Ludgate Circus commemorates his mayoralty, a tablet in Grosvenor Chapel marks the burial place of 'John Wilkes a friend to liberty'.

Younger than Burke and Wilkes, but still under King George, and belonging to the generation which was deeply influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution, Percy Bysshe Shelley is amongst the great poets who wrote in the county. He was educated at Eton, and was one of the few Etonians who resisted the spell and charm of the school, and was miserable there. Though all his life devoted to boating, he never cared for games, and was in revolt against all tradition and authority. He was as harshly treated at home as at Eton. Dr. Keate, the great head master in 1809, was then master of the lower school ; 'he flogged Shelley liberally, and the scapegrace in return plagued him without stint.' This imaginative and nervous boy was very sensitive to kindness, and was capable of the

most generous friendships; he delighted in science, but there was no modern side to a public school then; his experiments in chemistry led him into scrapes, and he left Eton with some abruptness in 1809. When we next find Shelley in Bucks he was only in his twenty-second year, his undisciplined character had brought much sorrow on himself and those dependent upon him, but he was already a master of English style in verse and prose, and full of unselfish enthusiasm and ideals. His friend, Thomas Love Peacock, whose novels of county society, *Headlong Hall*, *Nightmare Abbey*, and the rest, had a great run in their day, was living at Marlow. Shelley took Albion House at Marlow in 1815, and settled down there to write a long ambitious poem, *The Revolt of Islam*. In his preface Shelley reviews the hopes excited by the French Revolution, the panic produced by its excesses, with the violent reaction against freedom which was gradually giving place again to sanity. The object he set before him was to kindle 'a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence, nor misrepresentation, nor prejudice can ever totally extinguish among mankind. . . . There is no quarter given to revenge, or envy, or prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the world'. 'The poem was written,' as Mrs. Shelley tells us, 'in his boat as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished by peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks, or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited by a very poor population. The women were lace-makers and lost their health by sedentary labour, for which they were ill-paid. The Poor Laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor.'[4]

Many a poet, fastidious and sensitive as Shelley, might have been content to write about these sufferings rocking in his boat under the ' interlaced branches ' of the beech-trees, on the river he loved so well. But Shelley's love for the poor was not a mere sentimental emotion, his active and ready help was ever at their service ; he had many pensioners among the poor lace-makers, and he caught opthalmia severely and repeatedly, in ministering to the very poorest in their miserable homes. He and his wife lived on the simplest fare, in order to have more to give away ; the poet did not touch meat or wine, nor keep a horse. He never wished his charity to be known, his gifts were made with the greatest delicacy, and there is a story of his walking into Marlow without his shoes, having given his own to a poor woman.

Shelley had taken his house for twenty-one years, but there was no permanence in his troubled career, and, to the grief of their poor neighbours, he and his wife left Marlow for Italy after three years' residence there. He did not forget the Thames on the banks of the Tiber, and he writes to his friend Peacock about the massive ruins at Rome, of the Baths of Caracalla :—' The perpendicular walls resemble nothing more than that cliff at Bisham Wood, that is overgrown with wood, and yet is stony and precipitous. You know the one I mean ; not the chalk-pit, but the spot that has the pretty copse of fir-trees and privet bushes at its base, and where Hogg and I scrambled up, and you, to my infinite discontent, would go home.' In the summer of 1822 came the news that this brilliant career had been suddenly closed by the capsizing of a sailing boat off the coast of Leghorn. Shelley's lyrics are amongst the most musical and exquisite in our language ; such as his *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Cloud*, and *To a Skylark*. His life in Bucks is one of the many beautiful associations of our river scenery, specially as his love of Nature and his passion for liberty were combined with such practical sympathy and kindness as he showed to the poor of Great Marlow.

We have another, and, on the whole, a more cheerful account than that given by Mrs. Shelley. Cobbett, who had an intense sympathy with country life, records in his *Rural Rides* a journey through South and Mid Bucks in

1822. Labourers were getting from 8*s*. to 12*s*. a week, grass mowers 2*s*. a day, and as much beer as they could drink. They used roasted rye instead of coffee or tea, as it cost only ¾*d*. a lb. Both men and women were at work in the fields, and the little children were locked out of doors for the day. The farmers were in very low water, though prices were high and the land excellent both for corn and pasture. He remarks on the good looks of the labourers in spite of their hard fare, and their energy in cultivating their own 'neatly kept and productive little cottage gardens', seldom without flowers, 'an honour to England and which distinguishes it from all the rest of the world.' The little ones looked fat and well kept; the girls somewhat large-featured and large-boned, 'like the girls of America, and that is saying quite as much as any reasonable woman can expect or wish for.' 'Wycombe is one of those famous things called boroughs, and by thirty-four votes sends Sir John Dashwood and Sir Thomas Baring to the "collective wisdom".' But so little interest did the common people take in the matter that Cobbett's landlord at the Inn remembered Dashwood, but had forgotten 'the other'. Cobbett would not find much political indifference in Bucks at the present day.

[1] W. M. Thackeray, *The Four Georges*.
[2] Earl of Rosebery, 'The Grenvilles of Stowe,' in *Records of Bucks*.
[3] *Edmund Burke*, by John Morley. English Men of Letters.
[4] Mrs. Shelley's Preface to Shelley's Poems.

CHAPTER XXI

LOUIS XVIII AT HARTWELL HOUSE

THE first stirrings of the French Revolution were watched with interest and sympathy on this side of the Channel. France is the land of ideals, and those fine watchwords, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity stirred the hopes of English reformers till the wrongs and sufferings of the French peasants were forgotten in the horrible carnival of violence and cruelty which overwhelmed the monarchy,

the nobles, and the Church, and threatened to extinguish all the old civilization of France in a sea of blood.

A stream of miserable fugitives poured into England; never since the Reformation had so many Catholic priests, monks, and nuns been seen amongst us. But the animosity which their coming would otherwise have excited was softened by the sense of their suffering and destitution; and the county that had been hospitable to persecuted Lollards and Quakers showed a tolerant kindness to the fugitive Catholics. The Marquess of Buckingham took the lead in contributing and collecting money for the relief of the exiles, the Marchioness took charge of a whole convent of French nuns, and they paid for the printing of two editions of breviaries not otherwise obtainable in England. Edmund Burke took the deepest interest in the work of the committee for the relief of the French refugees, and at the end of his life he loved to visit the colony of French orphans at Penn, and to play with these fascinating little children.

When Louis XVI, murdered in 1793, had been followed to the grave by his only boy two years later, Louis, Comte de Provence, brother of Louis XVI, was titular King of France. Born in 1755 at Versailles, the most splendid Court in Europe, he early showed a ready wit in conversation and a love of literature and the classics; his elder brother preferred handwork as a locksmith or watchmaker. While they were both children, a provincial deputation came to interview Louis XV, who received them with his grandsons standing by. The business over, one of the gentlemen began paying elaborate compliments to the Duke de Berri (afterwards Louis XVI) but the boy stopped him saying, 'I'm not the clever one, it's my brother of Provence.' At the age of sixteen 'the clever boy' was married to Maria-Josepha of Savoy, amid universal rejoicings at Versailles, and there seemed not a cloud on the horizon. When the storm burst Louis escaped to Austria, and spent some unhappy years wandering about Europe from Venice to Moscow, each Government in turn giving him peremptory notice to quit. He bore sorrow and poverty with fortitude, and indignantly rejected an offer of Napoleon's to sell his birthright for a large sum of money; he returned the Order

of the Golden Fleece to the King of Spain, with a spirited letter, when he heard that the same order had been given to Napoleon after the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. At length, in 1807, he landed in England, and by the kind offices of the Marquess of Buckingham he obtained a resting-place in Bucks.

Hartwell House, which had belonged to the Lee family from the thirteenth century, is one of the beautiful old historical houses of the county, with its ample gardens and park and its fine trees.[1] This was rented by Louis XVIII, as Comte de Lille, from Sir George Lee for £500 a year, and was soon filled to overflowing with French exiles. His wife arrived from Russia, his brother the Count d'Artois, afterwards Charles X, came with his sons the Dukes of Berri and Angoulême (the latter married to Madame Royale, daughter of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette), accompanied by a number of priests and dependants.

The ministers of George III were not anxious to receive Louis XVIII for fear of diplomatic complications, but both the king and the common people showed him a good deal of sympathy. The boat's crew which rowed him ashore at Yarmouth from the flagship *Majestic* returned the purse he had left them as a present with a quaint letter to their admiral:[1] 'We holded a talk about that there £15. that was sent us, and hope no offence, your honour . . . we knows fast enuff that it was the true King of France that went with your honour in the boat and that he and our own Noble King bless 'em both, and give every one his right, is good friends now . . . and Mr. Leneve that steered your honour and that there King, says he won't have no hand in it, and so does the Coxen . . . so we all one and all begs not to take it at all.' Eventually the generous feeling shown by the bluejackets was emulated by the Government, and a grant of £14,000 a year was made to the king and £6,000 to the Duc d'Angoulême. Louis XVIII settled down to a quiet home life, he turned to his beloved books and found much comfort in Horace; when he met any one in the grounds he would salute him with true French politeness, and would speak a few words in tolerable English. He would send for old Mr. Fowler to come and see him as the only Aylesbury man who was said to speak

French. It pleased him to point out to visitors that on each side of the great doorway at Hartwell was a fleur de lis, carved in stone, as if in anticipation of his coming. Once in about three weeks he dined in public, as had been the custom of the old French Court, and visitors were allowed to walk round the table. He was called the Sage of Hartwell and was as popular in the country round as his brother was unpopular, with his haughty manners and perverse disposition. Madame Royale, 'the Orphan of the Temple,' was the most interesting member of the party, her terrible sorrows had left an impression of habitual sadness on her face and manner; she was a devout Catholic with a tender sympathy for all sufferers. An early riser and an active walker, she, unlike Louis, avoided society and could not bear attracting attention.

The farmers and market-gardeners round Aylesbury found excellent customers at Hartwell. There were usually from 140 to 200 persons in the house. The halls and galleries were subdivided by partitions, without any regard to their architecture, and whole families were stowed away in the attics. On the ledges and bows of the great roof were gardens in boxes, stocked with flowers and vegetables, the roof also became a pigeon-house and a poultry yard; the ornamental parapet was freely cut away when it interfered with these new uses; small windows were pierced in the walls; every outhouse and cottage in the park was full of people. The household were very well conducted, and with the gaiety of their nation amused themselves with music and dancing and made the best of the situation. They carved little French mottoes on the old trees, which kept *Quel plaisir* and *Toujours heureux* on their bark long after the departure of the carvers. It was characteristic of French taste, that in the large drawing-room a beautiful portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds of its former mistress, Lady Elizabeth Lee, was completely hidden away by an enormous mirror.

In 1808 the Marquess of Buckingham entertained the royal party at Stowe, and invited the county to meet them. An account of the visit has been preserved in the lively letters of his nephew, Sir Henry Williams Wynn, afterwards British Minister at Copenhagen.[2]

'Stowe. January 12, 1808. Altho' I arrived here yesterday before three o'clock I was but just in time to see the reception of *His Christian Majesty*. They were all drawn up to receive him on the steps when I, by dint of vociferation prevailed upon the Post Boy to drive in the back way. The moment he entered the House the Band struck up and Ld. Buckingham conducted him into the State Apartments, where there was a *cercle* till he went to dress, which operation, being I suppose pressed by Hunger, did not last ten minutes, but dinner was not thereby accelerated as we did not get down till ½ past 6. . . . The King seems a *good-natured good kind* of a man, but there is not certainly anything either in his appearance or manner very *attendrissant*. The dinner party yesterday consisted of 44 and is to-day to be augmented by 11 new arrivals. Among those yesterday were Lord and Lady Carysfort, Proby, Granville, Charlotte, and Fanny; Mr. and Mrs. T. Fremantle; Miss Wynn, Mr. and Mrs. Young, and a young Irish Heiress Miss O'Donnell, Ebrington, the two Nevilles, General Harvey, Neil Talbot, &c., &c. Lady Louisa Harvey, the Admiral and two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd, Lady Temple, and the Duc and Duchesse de Coigny, with two other Frenchmen arrive today.

'The dinner, *entre nous* (altho' there are four French cooks in the house), was the worst I ever saw upon a Table, and worse served than anything I ever saw before. Lord Buckingham took care of the King and all the rest of the Blood were obliged to take care of themselves, without a servant *literally* to take away their plates, or a glass of wine within their reach. The table was covered with dishes, which were so cold that they were not eatable with the exception of a *cold* Pye which from its proximity to an immense fire, was warmed up again. After dinner Lord Buckingham got up and said "The King permits me to give for a Toast the Royal and Illustrious House of Bourbon and God bless them" upon which the King gave "God bless the King and Old England for ever" which Lord Buckingham repeated and said that the King allowed him to add "The True Peace of Europe founded on a strict alliance between the two sovereigns". I fear that all the company will be noted down in Bona-

parte's black Book and that we shall pay for it if ever we go to France. When the first toast was given the Band played *O Richard, ô mon Roi!* after which the Master of the Band came up to Temple and asked him whether the Marseillais Hymn would not be a proper *air* to play. We did not of course sit very long after dinner, and by the assistance of cards and a little dancing we got on to near twelve o'clock when we all went to Bed. We have to-day been out with the Harriers but not had much sport. The King went with Lady Buckingham in the little Phaeton.

'Tomorrow we are to shoot, and on Thursday the King and the other Princes are to plant a clump of trees, each man his own tree. On Friday there is to be a grand ball and on Saturday they are all to go away. . . .'

'Stowe. January 14, 1808. We every day have the health of the *Royal and Illustrious* and he as regularly gives an appropriate Toast in return. Yesterday, after the planting we had the Toast, "and may their Posterity last longer than the latest acorn of the latest Tree they have this day planted." To which the King replied in English, "Our Noble Landlord to whom our gratefulness is as rooted as the oldest Oak." . . . They all seem very much pleased with the attentions which are shewn them, and certainly as far as expense goes nothing can be finer than the manner in which Lord Buckingham has received them.

'The whole set went out a Shooting yesterday, but whether it was that the Hares had been driven away, or that there were none, *la chasse était très mauvaise.*

'I cannot say, that, with the exception of one or two, any of the family have prepossessed me very much in their favour. Old Condé is by far the best, the Duke d'Angoulême seems a gentlemanlike man, but then one cannot easily forget how manfully he ran away from the Condé army. I cannot of course judge whether the King is pleasant in conversation, but one question he made does not tell much of his Historical knowledge. He asked me whether I understood Welsh as he wanted to know what the Prince of Wales' motto meant [*Ich dien*]. . . . Sunday. All the Frenchmen went yesterday and to-day we are almost reduced to a family party, consisting however, of more than 20. . . . Nothing could have been more pleasant than

the whole of this visit and everyone was sorry to see them go away. The King behaved during the whole time just as one would have wished, gracious with as much dignity as his porpoise-like figure would admit of. His last toast struck me as particularly neat and well expressed for a Foreigner. " May the remembrance of our visit here, be as agreeable to all present as it will be soothing to us." . . .'

The home life of Hartwell was sadly clouded in December 1810 by the death of the queen after a short illness. They were a childless couple, attached to each other in a quiet, matter of fact way. The king's letters give a pathetic account of his loneliness after her death, and how the sight of a white camellia or of any other flower she had loved, awoke his grief afresh, 'like a drop of wormwood in food.' 'I was not aware I loved the Queen so much as I now find I did,' he wrote very simply.

In 1811 another storm-bound monarch, Gustavus IV, ex-King of Sweden, arrived at Hartwell, having lost all his personal property as well as his kingdom. The portly Louis, who enjoyed an after-dinner doze over a book, found his guest unduly restless. ' Quiet is what he professes to want,' wrote the Sage of Hartwell, ' but surely whirling about the world is not the means of obtaining that object. . . . I now had rather that he had not come.' [1] It seemed improbable that life should hold any dramatic surprises in store for the kindly old gentleman who had never been, except in name, a king. But one spring morning (March 25, 1814) while mass was being celebrated in the dining-room, where Louis (not easily removable) was nursing his gout, his suite saw through the windows with silent excitement two post chaises with four horses apiece, and white flags, tearing up to the house. Napoleon had resigned, the Allies were entering Paris, and Louis, at last ' Desired ', had been proclaimed king. All was now bustle and stir, Louis signed a document in the library at Hartwell pledging him to observe the constitution, and the pen became a relic. Aylesbury, which had rather forgotten him, burst out into bunting and plaudits, the king alone, 'mobbed by visitors and pestered with addresses,' preserved his calm.

In less than a month he started from Aylesbury to assume his crown amid great enthusiasm ; the white flag of France

floated from the Town Hall, crowds cheered themselves hoarse, the Bucks Yeomanry escorted the king to Stanmore, where the Prince Regent met him with the state coach and cream-coloured horses, and they entered London in triumph. The Bucks Yeomen had given their money to one of their number to take care of, and this man had his purse stolen, so their share of the fun was a sorry one. The name of Bourbon Street still commemorates in Aylesbury this memorable day; and at Versailles the king reproduced the queen's private garden at Hartwell to remind him of 'the happy, happy days he had spent in that charming county'. One serio-comic incident the next year connected Bucks with the fortunes of Louis XVIII. As Sir George Lee took leave of his royal tenant on the steps of Hartwell, he accepted a cordial invitation to visit him at home. Sir George reached Paris the following spring to find it in the throes of another convulsion. Napoleon had landed from Elba, and the poor old king was being bundled off at a moment's notice to the Belgian frontier, with profuse apologies to his baffled guest. Byron's sarcastic lines were justified:—

'Good classic Louis! is it, canst thou say,
Desirable to be the "Desiré"?
Why wouldst thou leave calm Hartwell's green abode,
Apician table and Horatian ode,
To rule a people who will not be ruled,
And love much rather to be scourg'd than school'd?'

All England was stirred by the excitement of the Hundred Days' War. The Bucks regiment took the field again under Wellington at Waterloo.

Louis was reinstated; 'an old man in feeble health, posterity has done less than justice to his industry and sagacity. He ruled the country with a wise and delicate hand from his armchair, and in his armchair he died' (September 1824).[3]

When Paris rose in 1830 and Charles X was finally overthrown, his former neighbours in Bucks were interested but not surprised to hear it. And when by another turn of Fortune's wheel the younger branch of the Bourbons had won and lost the throne of France again, the Comte

de Paris, with his family, took refuge once more in the county, and it was at Stowe, where Lady Kinloss's ancestor had so hospitably entertained Louis XVIII, that he spent several quiet years and peacefully breathed his last in 1894.

[1] Capt. Smyth, R.N., *Ædes Hartwellianae.*
[2] MS. Letters of Sir Henry Wynn.
[3] W. G. Berry, *France since Waterloo.*

CHAPTER XXII

SCOTT THE COMMENTATOR AND SCOTT THE ARCHITECT

THE life of Thomas Scott (1747–1821)—known as 'the Commentator'—is an instance of an indomitable purpose that can surmount all difficulties. He had only seven years' schooling, but had set his heart on acquiring learning. He was working in Lincolnshire under a harsh father of old family and narrow prejudices, at the dirtiest parts of a grazier's work, and his health was suffering from exposure to weather. He made a desperate attempt to become a candidate for ordination, but was sent back to the fields for want of his father's consent, and for lack of testimonials. He never gave up hope or study while he minded the beasts, and was at last ordained deacon in 1772, and priest the next year. He was appointed to the curacies of Stoke Goldington and Weston-Underwood, which began a long and honourable connexion of the Scott family with the county.

Thomas Scott made acquaintance with John Newton, whom he succeeded at Olney, and lived next door to the poet Cowper. His income was but £50 a year; he taught himself Hebrew, and acquired an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures in the original. He married at the age of twenty-seven, and was so zealous to give his sons the education denied to his own youth, that three of them, at least, took degrees at Cambridge, and entered the church.

While his children were growing up, Thomas Scott removed to London; and in 1788 a publisher proposed to him to write a Commentary on the Bible, to appear in numbers, for each of which he was to receive a guinea. Without any of the critical knowledge now available, he brought to this immense work an enthusiastic love of the subject-matter, and an infinite capacity for patient labour; he collated words and phrases and compared Scripture with Scripture with minute care. In four years and a half he had accomplished his great task in 174 numbers; and he was then faced with nothing but disaster. The publisher became bankrupt, and though the merit of the work was immediately recognized, Scott was saddled with a crushing burden of debts and lawsuits.

Charles Simeon and other friends came to his aid, and his book went on selling in such large numbers that he was eventually solvent. He was given the Bucks living of Aston-Sandford, where in 1807 he undertook the training of students for the Church Missionary Society, and learnt Arabic in his old age. Meanwhile, his second son, another Thomas Scott, born at Weston-Underwood, was first curate at Emberton, and then Perpetual Curate at Gawcott. He married, in Bledlow Church, Euphemia Lynch of Antigua, connected with many old West Indian and Devonshire families, amongst others, with that of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, half-brother and companion-in-arms to Sir Walter Raleigh. Mr. Scott's aunt, Miss Gilbert, had been kissed as a child by John Wesley, 'the great saint of her memory', a tradition proudly passed on to her great-nephews; another relation, a naval officer, brought to Gawcott a flag he had taken in the American War.

Thomas Scott and Euphemia had a large family, the most famous of their sons being Sir Gilbert Scott, the architect. The Commentator had a peaceful and honoured old age; he was the great light of the Evangelical party, and his *Commentary* had become a classic. His only daughter married a pupil he had prepared for Cambridge, the Rev. Samuel King, who had been curate of Hartwell during Louis XVIII's residence there, and was Rector of Haddenham, the next parish to Aston-Sandford, and the two men were constantly together.

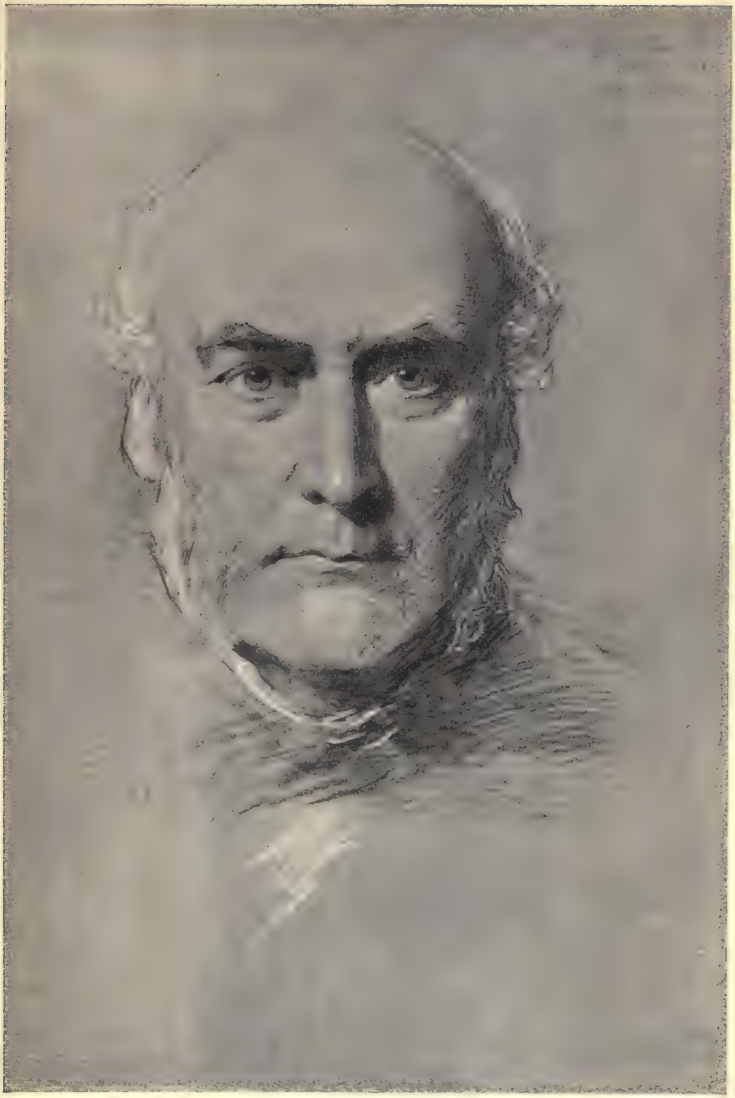
Scott's grandson, the architect, has left a lively account of the annual migration of the family from Gawcott to Aston-Sandford. 'The post-chaise was ordered from Buckingham to carry seven, my father and mother occupied the seat, three small children stood in front, two sat in the dickey behind, and the fat old post-boy rode postillion. My grandfather was a thin tottering old man; very grave and dignified. He wore knee-breeches with silver buckles, black silk stockings, and a shovel hat. He had a black velvet cap except at church, when he donned a venerable wig. The barber who made it was a pious man, who himself put two sons into the Church. He walked over from Risborough every Sunday to hear my grandfather preach, and a place was always kept for him at the dinner-table. Family prayers at the Rectory were formidable to a child: they lasted a full hour, several persons from the village attending them. . . . The whole household seemed imbued with the religious sentiment. Old Betty the cook, Lizzy the waiting maid, and old Betty Moulder, an infirm inmate, taken in on account of her excellence and helplessness, were all patterns of goodness; and even poor John Brangwin the serving-man partook of the atmosphere of the Rectory. I visited him with three of my sons (in 1863) in an almshouse at Chenies, when he poured forth his recollections of my grandfather. It was Sunday, and we found him reading in his copy of the *Commentary* left him in my grandfather's will, and he had just had a cold dinner. "Muster Scott never had anything cooked o' Sabbath days," and he had followed his precepts for more than forty years after his death.'[1]

The old Commentator in his strenuous work had helped much abler men than faithful John Brangwin. Cardinal Newman, as an undergraduate, spoke of Scott as 'the man to whom, humanly speaking, I almost owe my soul'; he first planted deep in Newman's mind the doctrine of the Trinity—and this disciple, who found salvation along a widely different road, always praised Scott's 'bold unworldliness, and vigorous independence of mind', and sums up his spirit in the maxims 'Holiness before peace' and 'Growth is the evidence of Life'. Another great thinker who differed as widely from Newman, as Newman did from

Scott, the Judge, Sir James Stephen, ranked his writing in its deep sincerity as 'the greatest theological work of our age and country'. His *Commentary* was a mine freely worked by later Evangelical writers, and 'formed the basis of the devotional study of the Scriptures for two generations of Englishmen'.

When Thomas Scott died, in 1821, Aston-Sandford Church was far too small to hold the sorrowing crowds that had assembled there; they moved on to the next parish, and Daniel Wilson, afterwards Bishop of Calcutta, preached his funeral sermon in Mr. King's large church at Haddenham.

At Gawcott, the third son, little Gilbert, was not specially considered in the large family circle at the Parsonage, and was left to grow up much as he pleased, with the happiest results. The hamlet had long been neglected, only a name and a few stones in a field recalled the fact that Gawcott had once had a chapel. An excellent man, John West, who had made his money as a lace-buyer, consulted the elder Thomas Scott in the first years of the nineteenth century about building a church in his native village. He had infinite difficulties to overcome, and opposition even from the Bishop, but at last a little church was built and consecrated. Sir Gilbert, who was to do so much hereafter to create quite a different standard of taste, describes it as 'absurdly unecclesiastical, with a roof sloping all ways, and a belfry such as one sees over the stables of a country house. The pulpit occupied the middle of the south side, the pews facing it from N.E. and West, the font was a wash-hand stand with a white basin'. Thomas Scott, the younger, was the first perpetual curate of the new church, and he hired the Vicarage at Buckingham, where the Vicar was non-resident. Later on he collected money to build a Vicarage, and to rebuild John West's church, which showed signs of falling to pieces after some twenty-five years, and himself designed the present edifice. His boy stood watching the foundations being put in, and remembered his father telling a friend he was about to apprentice Gilbert to an architect; the friend's remark that he would no doubt rise to the head of his profession, and his father's quick reply, 'Oh, no, his abilities are not sufficient for that.' Happily the boy had better models within reach than Gawcott



Geo. Richmond del.

SIR GILBERT SCOTT, R.A.

Church; he constantly visited the fine perpendicular churches at Hillesden and Maids Morton, and brooded over them. At Tingewick he found some interesting Norman work, and Chetwode Church was a revelation to him of Early English architecture.

As quite a little boy he was intensely happy, wandering about alone, with his pencil and sketch-book, loving Gothic architecture by instinct, without any idea that it could ever be used again. An early love of pictures, engravings, and sculpture was fostered by visits to Stowe, before any of its art treasures had been dispersed at the sale in 1848; the children were allowed to drive up the avenue with their mother, in a baker's cart, their father riding alongside; and to picnic in the Grecian Temple of Concord and Victory.

Buckingham possessed at that time in Mr. Jones a remarkable art-master, but of so humble and unambitious a character that he failed to do any high-class work of his own. He had been sent up to the Royal Academy in his youth by some of the Stowe family, and had been much noticed by Sir Joshua Reynolds—a proud memory for all his later years of affectionate retrospect. Mr. Jones's visits twice a week were the great events of Gilbert Scott's boyhood. He sat watching the garden-path till he could see ' with heart-felt joy, his master's loose drab gaiters through the bushes ', and they would go off together to sketch the porch or the stair-turret at Hillesden.

Gawcott was full of ' odd, quaint characters ', well known and liked by the Vicar's children. There was Mr. Law the ' perpetual churchwarden ', who lined the plate after charity sermons with a one-pound note out of his well-filled breeches pockets; the old yeoman, Benjamin Warr, with his sturdy wife and twenty children, the sons six feet high, who made a brave show in church in their big, square pew; John Walker, of Lenborough, the best dairy farmer, yeomanry-cavalier, singer, and Christian gentleman of the country-side, more than once mayor of Buckingham; there was Tom O'Gawcott, a converted prize-fighter; and some mad people, who were soothed—like King Saul—by the strains of the village fiddler. One of them, an old soldier, Cracky Meads, was always ready to show ' how fields were won ' with a bayonet he kept under his bed, to the terror

and delight of the children. There were well-known and accepted poachers, especially a tailor, who was ever ready to oblige the Vicar's lady with a hare. When the Vicar first came, full of missionary zeal, to reconnoitre the parish, he found a large hole dug across the road, and the men sitting round it, baiting a badger. All the women and girls made lace; there was a vertical post in the cottages, revolving on an axis, with a wooden arm, to which baby children were secured, so that they could run round and round the kitchen, while the mother slaved at her lace-pillow. Mr. West, the church-builder, shared one room with his servants, all helping themselves out of one dish at dinner, placed in the middle of a round table. One old 'peasant-lady', Nanny White, kept a maid, and lived almost in state, and when the Vicarage children went to tea with her once a year, they were made to sit on old high-backed chairs with twisted pillars and cane backs, which came from the sale of the second great house at Hillesden, built after the siege, which had just been bought and pulled down by the Duke of Buckingham, to little Gilbert's intense regret.

An old man kept a small private school in Gawcott; most of the people could read, they had large gardens, and fat sides of bacon hung in the wood smoke of their wide old cottage chimneys.

Gilbert Scott left Gawcott, without regret, at fourteen, quite unconscious of the deep impression these village scenes had made on his memory. After a hard apprenticeship to the most uncongenial styles of architecture, he suddenly lost his father, and soon after received a commission to build several of the Union Workhouses required under the new Poor Law Act in 1834, of which two were at Buckingham and Amersham.

His eldest sister was married to the Rev. J. H. Oldrid, who succeeded their father at Gawcott, and it was in his old home that Gilbert Scott met the cousin, Carry Oldrid, whom he married in 1838. Some arduous years of distasteful commissions followed, when workhouses and cheap churches in the debased art of the time were all that the nation asked of this great artist.

But the seed sown at Hillesden and Maids Morton was

yet to yield a harvest ; in 1844 Scott achieved a European reputation by winning the open competition for a great church at Hamburg, with designs in fourteenth-century German Gothic. The Oxford Movement, which gradually brought about a revulsion of feeling against the half-pagan Georgian churches, and a reverent admiration of mediaeval services and architecture, found an interpreter in this truly Christian architect. From 1845 to the end of his life in 1878, designs for new buildings, restorations, and reports were constantly required of him. In the great days of his fame he gave of his best towards the restoration of many Bucks churches. He saved the fine tower of Aylesbury Church, which was ready to fall, and gave two small figures of saints for the south transept doorway ; he restored the churches in Middle and East Claydon, Chesham, Great Horwood, and others. He rejoiced to find everywhere that the consequence of such restoration was always a vast increase in the number of worshippers. In Hereford Cathedral he found a displaced monument to one of his old friends, the Dentons of Hillesden, which he restored with special interest, but the work that gave him the greatest pleasure was his appointment as the architect in charge of Westminster Abbey.

He has himself told of the restoration of Hillesden, ' a church dearly loved by me, as that which first called forth my reverence for architecture . . . after nearly half a century I was called upon to survey the dear old church, with a view to its restoration. Decay, neglect and mutilation had been silently doing their deadly work. I undertook the work not professionally, but as a labour of love. . . . I had the privilege of myself replacing the exquisite fan-groining of the porch.' Much of the lost work was restored from the careful sketches Scott had made as a boy of eleven, and he found again scraps of stone-mouldings which he had himself hidden away in order to preserve them. The thought of the beautiful building, whose existence was indefinitely prolonged by his care, was one of the enduring joys of his life. In 1872 he completed the Albert Memorial, and was knighted by Queen Victoria ; he felt that this recognition lost half its value as his beloved wife could no longer share it with him. In the spring of 1878, in the

midst of much important work, with which his sons were helping him, Sir Gilbert Scott's health failed rather suddenly. In his last hours his mind went back to Gawcott, and he remembered Mr. Churchwarden Law dining one Sunday at the Vicarage, and the delight of the children when, confused with many cruets, he solemnly sprinkled his meat with sugar!

It seems a far cry from Gawcott to Westminster, but it was in the Abbey that the great Bucks architect was fitly laid to rest. Dean Stanley, in his sympathetic sermon, spoke of him as 'one of those just, gentle, guileless souls who in their lives have lifted and in their memories may still lift, our souls upwards. It has been said that it was by a strange irony of fate that the great leader in the revival of mediaeval architecture should have been the grandson of that venerable commentator who belonged to the revival of evangelical religion. Yet in fact . . . it was a fitting continuity . . . in the deep sense of inward religion, that simple faith in the Great Unseen, the grandson who multiplied and disclosed the secrets of the visible sanctuaries of God throughout the land, was not an unworthy descendant of the grandfather who endeavoured, according to the light of his time, to draw forth the mysteries of the Book of Books.'

[1] Sir Gilbert Scott, *Recollections of my Life.*

CHAPTER XXIII

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

Benjamin Disraeli may be said to have been the most notable figure in Bucks during the Victorian era.

His career exhibited very dramatic contrasts. The county which was so greatly to honour him in middle life, would have none of him in youth. In Bucks he received the first buffets and humiliations which beset the opening of a career that threatened to be only whimsical, eccentric, and vain. In Bucks his genius and patience won him

a safe seat in Parliament, which he held as Prime Minister of England. From Bucks he took his title as a peer, and it was here, rather than in Westminster Abbey, that he chose to be laid to rest. From his grave at Hughenden sprang the Primrose League that has done so much to keep his memory green. Queen Victoria sent a wreath of primroses to his funeral inscribed as being 'his favourite flower'.

Lord Beaconsfield's father, Isaac d'Israeli, was an antiquary and bookworm, who, honourably preferring scholarship and poetry to money-making, abandoned the counting-house in which he had been started. Before he was thirty he published a book, *Curiosities of Literature*, which at once made him a name. Descended from a long line of Spanish Jews, Isaac d'Israeli wished to be considered an Englishman, and had his son (born in 1804) baptized into the Church of England. But the prejudice against the Jews, who were still excluded from English public life, was not lightly to be got rid of, and Mrs. d'Israeli would not risk the ill-treatment her son might meet with at Eton or Oxford. Benjamin was therefore brought up mainly at home; he often worked twelve hours a day, devouring books, conscious of great powers, and passionately ambitious to use them. Isaac d'Israeli bought the fine Elizabethan Manor House at Bradenham, among pleasant beech woods and breezy commons. There is a story that Benjamin, aged fourteen, walking home with another boy to Bradenham by moonlight, confided to him that he meant 'to get himself talked about, to write a book, to make speeches, to get into Parliament and become a Privy Councillor'. His friend told him not to talk such nonsense.

In early manhood Benjamin Disraeli published an audacious and sparkling novel, *Vivian Grey*, the hero of which was admittedly his own portrait, and he succeeded admirably 'in getting himself talked about'. The 'perfumed boy-exquisite who forced his way into the saloons of peeresses' was always the subject of remark; 'men held aloof but observant women prophesied that he had the makings in him of a great man.' The next item of his boyish programme was harder to achieve. In 1832 there

was a vacancy in the neighbouring borough. Young Disraeli 'drove into High Wycombe in an open carriage and four, his hair was in long black curls, and he was dressed with his usual exuberance of laced shirt, flowered waistcoat and coat with a pink lining'; his opponent, son of Lord Grey, the Prime Minister, had arrived on his first visit; Disraeli seized the opportunity for an impromptu address. 'All Wycombe was assembled,' he wrote to his sister; 'I jumped upon the portico of the Red Lion and gave it them for an hour and a quarter, I can give you no idea of the effect; a great many absolutely cried . . . all the women are on my side and wear my colours pink and white.'[1] Colonel Grey himself confessed he had never heard a finer command of words; they certainly did not lack force. Standing as a Radical, he described the Whigs as 'that rapacious, tyrannical and incapable faction, who having knavishly obtained power by false pretences, sillily suppose that they will be permitted to retain it by half measures'. Mr. Disraeli was badly beaten, and made an angry speech when the poll closed; Colonel Grey was chaired round the town with musical honours. This was the first of three exasperating defeats in the same borough. When, in 1837 (as the Tory member for Maidstone), Disraeli's first florid speech in the House was greeted with scornful derision, there was 'something absolutely heroic in the alert defiance' with which the new member faced the cruel storm of laughter. 'I shall sit down now,' he said, 'but the time will come when you will hear me.' His chief, Sir Robert Peel, called it 'anything but a failure', and said that Disraeli was bound to make his way. He was clever enough to take a friend's advice that he should get rid of his genius for a session, speak shortly, and try to be dull.

Two years later, in 1839, he married a rich widow, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, much older than himself. Disraeli describes their first meeting, when he thought her the greatest talker he had ever known, a perfect 'rattle',[1] and she told him that she liked 'silent, melancholy men'; but this oddly assorted couple became entirely devoted to each other, and enjoyed the happiest married life for thirty-three years. His great interest in social questions inspired more novels; in *Coningsby* he treated of the

hardships of the peasantry under the new poor-law; in *Sybil* his vivid pictures of the misery and squalor of the workers in towns did much to promote the Factory Acts, and to hasten reform.

In 1847 he at length represented Bucks in Parliament, and retained the seat as long as he wished to keep it. There was still some horse-play, but the laugh was now on his side. At one Bucks election a man in the crowd shouted 'speak louder and quicker'; he stopped, and singling the man out, said very deliberately, 'I must speak slowly to drive what I have to say into your thick head.' 'You've got it now, Joe,' said the crowd, and there were no more interruptions. A small house with one field called Hatchman's, in the Hambleden valley, is pointed out as giving Disraeli his first title to a vote in the county.

He was familiarly known as 'Dizzy', the possession of a nickname being a sure sign of popularity. He was as indifferent to wealth as he was greedy of fame, but his wife's fortune and her careful economies, with the devotion of his friends, relieved him from any financial anxiety, and he could in his later life command large sums of money for his novels.

When forming his Government as Premier in 1874, Disraeli gave the post of Secretary to the Treasury to Mr. W. H. Smith, who by his purchase of Greenlands, the old house of Bulstrode Whitelock, had become a Bucks country gentleman like his chief. In 1877 Smith joined the Cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty, an appointment which showed Disraeli's discernment of character. No two men could be more unlike, Smith was as slow and deliberate as the Premier was brilliant and dramatic; *Punch*'s affectionate nickname for Smith of 'Old Morality', expressed the reputation for integrity and good sense which he had acquired. The Rt. Hon. W. H. Smith became Leader of the House of Commons and Warden of the Cinque Ports, and was locally a great benefactor to South Bucks; he will be remembered not only as a politician of stainless character, but as a promoter and distributor of the cheap and wholesome literature in railway bookstalls and circulating libraries, by which so many readers have been created. After his death in 1891, which was hastened by strenuous devotion to

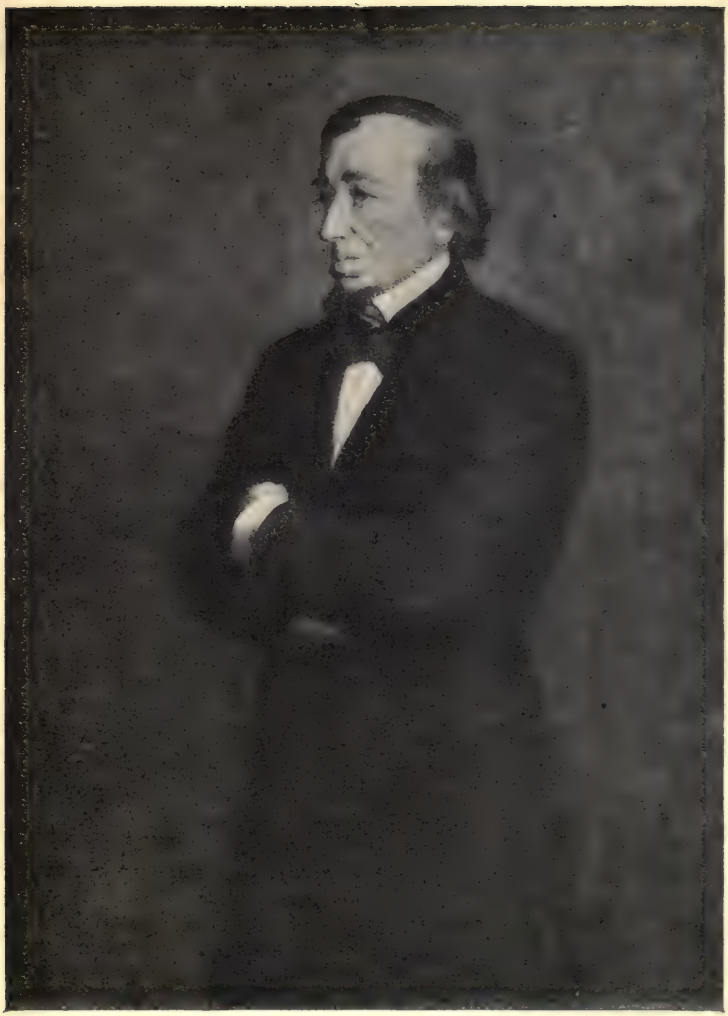
public work, his widow was made Viscountess Hambleden, with remainder to his heirs.

Disraeli's political career, his unfailing skill and good humour in opposition, his policy as Prime Minister from 1874 to 1880, belong to the larger history of England; but two points must still be mentioned, his life as the Squire of Hughenden, and his friendship with his Sovereign, 'which none of his predecessors or successors have ever approached.'

On his father's death in 1848 he succeeded to Bradenham, and he had purchased the adjoining estate and house of Hughenden, from whose doors he had been rudely shut out in his young electioneering days, and where he was later to receive Queen Victoria as his guest. He loved the historical associations of Hughenden, and the monuments in the church; he was fond of telling how Simon de Montfort lived there, and had come out from this house to compel King John to sign Magna Carta. He revived the arms and motto of his Spanish ancestors 'Forti nihil difficile'.

He was fond of Bucks and proud of the place the county filled in history; he would relate how the great rebellion 'was hatched in these hills, and whatever evidence of it still existed in the bosom of the Chilterns, was carefully removed when the Stuarts reappeared upon the scene'. Mrs. Disraeli loved to tell her guests of his favourite flowers, of his great love for trees, and birds, specially the garden songsters, the thrush, the black-cap, the goldfinch, and the whole tribe of warblers, and how he could not bear to see a dead bird or a fallen tree.

'The calm of satisfied ambition' was saddened in his later years by the loss of the wife who had loved him so well.[1] 'His chief pleasure was to be at Hughenden and often alone.[2] He would wander through the park or the Bradenham woods, which in his youth had been the scene of so many ambitious and moody meditations. His trees, his peacocks, his swans, his lake and chalk stream were full of the memories of his married life. The cedars in his garden were raised from seed that he himself had brought from Palestine. He was on pleasant terms with his tenants and labourers, he visited them in their cottages, and was



Lockhart Bogle pinx.

LORD BEACONSFIELD

From the picture in the National Portrait Gallery

specially kind to old people and to little children. He would never allow that Bucks labourers were stolid; he called them 'a stalwart race, shrewd, and open to reason'.[2] No dust-heaps, or cess-pools, choked drains or damp floors were to be seen on his property. To such matters he looked with his own eyes, and said he was never so happy as when left to himself in these occupations. Three things he said were necessary to a good cottage—an oven, a tank, and a porch. He was careful never to let game be a grievance, and the farmers willingly preserved for him; he was a familiar figure among them in his leather gaiters, with a spud in his hand. His witty and satirical sayings were caught up and quoted; as when he said that "an insular country subject to fogs, and with a powerful middle class, required grave statesmen", or described the elderly occupants of the Liberal Front Bench as "extinct volcanoes".'

In his last novel of *Endymion*, which brought him in £10,000, he amused himself by describing, under the name of Hurstfield, the old hall at Bradenham, with its gable ends and lattice windows, its huge wrought iron gates, 'the sylvan beauty of the old chase, and the romantic villages in the wooded clefts of the downs. The clumps of fine beech-trees, and the juniper which rose to a great height, gave a rich wildness to the scene, and sustained its forest character.'

'The leader of the country gentlemen, he aspired to be a country gentleman himself, to be a magistrate to sit in top boots at Quarter Sessions and manage local business.'[1] At the magistrates' dinners his conversation was racy and original, he took pains to be kind and charming, and to draw out new men. He was a great believer in youth, he considered that 'Extreme youth coupled with ceremonious manners' was the best recommendation for a rising politician; and he said more seriously—'We live in an age when to be young and to be indifferent can be no longer synonymous. We must prepare for the coming hour. The claims of the Future are represented by suffering millions, and the Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity.' His speeches at Bucks agricultural dinners were read all over England with delight, when in his character as a Bucks farmer, turnips and high politics were

deftly combined. The impersonation was very literally carried out. Mr. Fowler, a devoted admirer, has told us how startled the county people were to see 'their beloved M.P. entering the showyard in full panoply of agricultural mail . . . in a brown velveteen shooting-coat with a flapping waistcoat, with long dark brown leather gaiters drawn over his black trousers, a black billy-cock hat, and a blue bird's-eye silk handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, he carried a thick spud in his hand. Every one was screaming with laughter, as the genuine Bucks farmers were dressed in the best modern style'.[2] Something of a theatrical taste in dress clung to this remarkable man to the last.

In 1880, when Mr. Disraeli had been made a peer after bringing back 'Peace with Honour' from Berlin, he had an enthusiastic reception at Aylesbury on the eve of a general election. The crowds round the George Hotel and the Corn Exchange were so dense that his friends endeavoured to take him in by a back way, but every door was bolted and barred, and Lord Beaconsfield asked, with a twinkle in his eye, 'Have you no experienced burglar about here?' At last a gentleman stole an iron meat hook from the butchers' market, and wrenched open the door, and in this way the Prime Minister entered to make a great speech. There was wild enthusiasm inside as soon as he was recognized, political friends and foes vied with each other to make the old man welcome; but the result of the elections was to drive him from office for the last time.

Lord Beaconsfield's friendship with Queen Victoria was a remarkable chapter in both their lives. He first showed his sympathy with the queen by a speech in the House of Commons on the death of the Prince Consort, 'She who reigns over us,' he said, 'has elected amid all the splendours of Empire to establish her life on the principles of domestic love.' When he became leader of the House of Commons, the queen, to show her sympathy with the Government, consented to open Parliament in person. His opinion of the crown's relation to foreign affairs exactly coincided with her own. 'He did what no other Minister in the reign succeeded in doing, in private talk with her he amused her, as his social charm lightened the routine of state business. He briefly informed her of the progress of affairs, but did

not overwhelm her with details.' In one of his trenchant phrases he compared his relations with the queen with those of his great predecessor—' Gladstone treats the Queen like a public department, I treat her like a woman.' In 1876 Disraeli introduced the Royal Titles Bill proclaiming the queen Empress of India. The queen loved her Indian subjects, and the new title pleased her extremely. In the following August she honoured her minister by paying him a visit with Princess Beatrice, in circumstances of much publicity. The queen passed under an arch of chairs, the Mayor of Wycombe presented an address of welcome ; she remained at Hughenden for two hours and planted a tree on the lawn.

A pretty story is told of Lord Beaconsfield in old age, which was current about 1878.[3] ' Sitting at dinner by the Princess of Wales (Alexandra) he was trying to cut a hard dinner-roll. The knife slipped and cut his finger, which the Princess, with her natural grace, instantly wrapped up in her handkerchief. The old gentleman gave a dramatic groan and exclaimed, " When I asked for bread they gave me a stone, but I had a Princess to bind my wounds." '

The queen called him to the peerage as Earl of Beaconsfield, and in 1878 gave him the Order of the Garter. Lord Beaconsfield died in London, April 19, 1881. His funeral in Hughenden churchyard was a memorable occasion. The Prince of Wales and Prince Leopold, cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and county magnates mingled with the villagers who truly mourned his loss. Four days later some distant neighbours, who had driven over to pay a last tribute of respect, found that the queen herself had come down that afternoon privately, to lay a wreath of white camellias on the grave of him whom she called ' my dear, great friend '. She set up a memorial tablet to him in Hughenden church, with an inscription of her own penning, and the text ' Kings love him that speaketh right '.

The queen wrote to an intimate friend—' His devotion and kindness to me, his wise counsels, his great gentleness combined with firmness ; his one thought of the honour and glory of the country, and his unswerving loyalty to the throne, make the death of my dear Lord Beaconsfield a national calamity—and my grief is great and lasting.'

During the lifetime of Disraeli, another Jewish family settled in Bucks, whose influence in the county has been even more enduring and far-reaching than his own, the great financial house of the Rothschilds.

The banker, whose family controlled the finance of Europe, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, had to fight for eleven years, with the help of Lord John Russell, for the right of a Jew to sit in the English Parliament. He gained his cause at last, and bought much property in the county. His eldest son, Baron de Rothschild, is our Lord-Lieutenant, and the generous supporter of all county institutions ; his cousin and son-in-law, Baron Ferdinand, bought the Waddesdon estate, became member for Aylesbury, and often entertained King Edward VII at Waddesdon Manor; his grandson, Mr. Lionel de Rothschild, is member for Mid Bucks.

By the marriage of the Earl of Rosebery with Miss Hannah de Rothschild, the heiress of Mentmore, Bucks numbers amongst her landowners yet another Prime Minister, and a most brilliant writer and speaker.

In 1851 a cousin, Sir Anthony, bought the estate and rebuilt the house of Aston Clinton ; he was High Sheriff of Bucks in 1861. His wife, Louisa Lady de Rothschild, survived till 1910, in full possession of her remarkable faculties to her ninetieth year.

The Rt. Hon. George W. E. Russell, sometime member for Aylesbury, continuing the friendship between his family and hers, has written a sketch of this beloved lady from which he allows a quotation.[4] ' Both in London and at Aston Clinton, Sir Anthony and Lady de Rothschild exercised a varied and brilliant hospitality, in which what was merely fashionable was agreeably relieved by the presence of such men as Disraeli, and Bishop Wilberforce, Thackeray . . . Robert Lowe, Delane, and Matthew Arnold. The mention of Thackeray's name suggests a pleasant reminiscence of that really kind-hearted man. Lady de Rothschild once remonstrated with him on the contemptuous tone which in his writings he adopted towards the Jewish race. He promptly made amends by inserting the following paragraph in the second chapter of *Pendennis* : " I saw a Jewish lady only yesterday, with a child at her

knee, and from whose face towards the child there shone a sweetness so angelical that it seemed to form a sort of glory round both." That child was Constance de Rothschild, afterwards Lady Battersea.'

This influence extended far beyond her own little daughters; Lady de Rothschild was a builder of schools, and a keen promoter of education, she loved to hear children's voices and children's laughter all about her. ' Her conversation was like her person, exquisitely gentle and refined . . . her convictions were clear and resolute. She was gentle in speech, and firm in action. She was a life-long and enthusiastic Liberal, a staunch Free-Trader and an ardent supporter of all movements which favoured National Temperance. . . . " Evil speaking, lying and slandering," vulgar gossip, and malicious tittle-tattle could not live in her presence. She enthroned in the shrine of her inmost heart the highest ideal of life and duty, and that ideal seemed insensibly and unspokenly to purify the surrounding air, and to elevate the world in which she lived.' This is perhaps the finest instance one can recall, of a beautiful soul, unspoiled by ' great possessions '.

[1] J. A. Froude, *Earl of Beaconsfield.*
[2] J. K. Fowler, *Echoes of Old Country Life.*
[3] Rt. Hon. G. W. E. Russell, *Collections and Recollections.*
[4] *Louisa Lady de Rothschild.*

CHAPTER XXIV

BUCKS SAILORS AND SOLDIERS, YEOMANRY, MILITIA, AND VOLUNTEERS

After the obligations of feudal tenure had fallen into disuse, and before the existence of a standing army, the gentlemen of a county still brought their own retainers into the field, or the Government desired the Lord-Lieutenants and their deputies to levy so many men. Thus, in 1588, the county sent its contingent to Tilbury for the defence of Her Majesty's person, when the Spanish Armada was expected, and raised men again in 1599, when Borlase,

Pigott, and Hampden were captains of the foot-bands. In 1592 thirty men were to be chosen from Bucks, sent to the seaside, and shipped to Jersey, to strengthen Elizabeth's forces in Brittany, under Sir John Norris. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Philip, Lord Wharton, raised a regiment for the Parliament, which fought at Edgehill, but these new levies were no match for the Cavaliers. James II began to organize a regular army in the great camp on Hounslow Heath, in 1685, when the Earl of Huntingdon raised the 13th Regiment of the Line, 'composed of men of Buckinghamshire.'

Two regiments of foot more permanently associated with the county were the 14th, founded by Sir Edward Hales in 1685, and the 16th, by Colonel Archibald Douglas in 1688. Both these men suffered for their fidelity to King James; Douglas was superseded in command of the Regiment by William III; and Hales, who became a Roman Catholic and accompanied King James in his first abortive flight, was long imprisoned in the Tower, and died in France. His Regiment, the 14th, distinguished itself in the defence of Gibraltar, 1727, at Culloden, in North America, and in Flanders. In a desperate fight at Famars, near Valenciennes, in 1793, with the Duke of York in command, the regiment was so fiercely attacked by the French revolutionary troops that it fell back for a moment, when Doyle, their colonel, dashed to the front, and calling to the drummers who were under fire to strike up 'Ça Ira', the spirited revolutionary song, he cried out, 'Come along, my lads, let's break up the scoundrels to their own tune.' The effect was irresistible, 'the enemy found themselves running away before they could turn round'; and in General Orders after the battle, 'Ça Ira' was given to the 14th as their own special quick march. In an arduous crisis during the siege of Valenciennes, this same year, the whole regiment volunteered to go to the assault; and when the news reached Winchester of the capture of the town, their friends in the Bucks Militia, who were encamped there, fired volleys of joy in the cathedral yard to celebrate their prowess.

In praising men of war, a famous Bucks gunsmith must not be forgotten. John Griffin (1692–1766), blacksmith in

the little village of Moulsoe, was credited with making the best muskets and fowling-pieces which could be had ; they sold for six or seven guineas. In his less martial moments Griffin invented the Mortice Lock and a mould for covered buttons.

To return to the soldiers—the 16th Foot had fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, Ramillies, and Malplaquet, had served in America and the West Indies, and was known as the Bucks Regiment, while, since 1782, the 14th had been called the Bedfordshire.

In 1806 Sir Harry Calvert was made Colonel of the 14th, and the second battalion was reinforced by a fine draft of 120 volunteers from the Royal Bucks Militia. At the same time, General Wynne raised a famous regiment of horse in Wycombe, which town sent ninety-six men to the war with Napoleon, from the borough and parish. The second battalion of the 14th served in the Peninsula under Sir John Moore, and the word 'Corunna' was inscribed on their colours. When they returned home the men were collected at Buckingham and Aylesbury, at their colonel's request ; were henceforth known as the Buckinghamshire Regiment, and again received strong reinforcements from the county militia ; the 16th became the Bedfordshire.

Sir Harry Calvert was a zealous army reformer, and as Adjutant-General from 1799 to 1821, and the intimate friend and adviser of the Duke of York, he was able to accomplish much. He supported the plans of Colonel John Gaspard le Marchant for training Staff Officers, then quite a new idea. By adapting the old Antelope Inn at High Wycombe, a college was started in 1799, with a junior department at Great Marlow, under the Duke of York's patronage ; and in 1808 his brother, the Duke of Kent, 'reviewed the young gentlemen of the Military Academy at Marlow', a fine old brick house, now the property of the Wethered family.

In an early Victorian novel, *Cyril Thornton*, which gives an excellent account of army life in the first years of the nineteenth century, the hero is represented as joining the colours at Dublin, and when he is presented to the Duke of Kent, a great stickler for military correctness, the Duke asks him at once, 'Are you from Marlow, Sir ?'

The Wycombe college did excellent service under le Marchant, and trained over 200 officers in nine years, including many of Wellington's staff ; the two colleges were amalgamated later, and transferred to Sandhurst. General le Marchant was killed at Salamanca in 1812, and Wellington thought that ' the success was dearly purchased by his loss '. Two gallant young cavalry officers of Wycombe, twin-brothers, William and Gillespie White, fell in this war, one at Salamanca, the other in Egypt, both holding the rank of Deputy Quartermaster-General ; they are commemorated in Wycombe Church. Other Peninsular veterans belonging to the county were General Sir James Watson, born at Chilton, who served under the Duke of York, and commanded the 14th Regiment at the capture of Île de France and Java, and died at Wendover in 1862 ; General Sir William Clayton, of Harleyford, who after serving in Spain and at Waterloo was member for Marlow for thirteen years ; and Colonel Hanmer, another of Wellington's officers, who was M.P. for Aylesbury, and died in 1868, at the age of eighty.

We have a lively account of the share taken by Bucks men in the last campaign against Napoleon, in the *Recollections of the Earl of Albemarle*, who, as the youngest ensign in the army, carried the colours of the third battalion of the Buckinghamshire Regiment to victory at Waterloo in 1815. ' Fourteen of the officers and 300 of the men were under twenty years of age—they were Bucks lads fresh from the plough, called at home " The Bucks ", but nicknamed " The Peasants ". Our Colonel, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Calvert, bore the name of a celebrated brewer, and as the 14th was one of the few regiments with three battalions, we were also nicknamed Calvert's Entire. In my C.O., Colonel Tidy, I found a good-looking man, of spare but athletic figure, and frank, cheerful, and agreeable manners . . . he was in high spirits at having procured for his regiment a share in the honour of the forthcoming campaign. They were drawn up in the square at Brussels to be inspected by an old General Mackenzie, who called out to them, " Well, I never saw such a set of boys, both officers and men ". Tidy asked him to modify the expression. " I should have added," said the veteran, repeating the

charge, "that I never saw *so fine* a set of boys, both officers and men," and upon this he ordered the colonel to march them off the ground, to join a brigade to garrison Antwerp. Tidy would not budge a step; and Lord Hill, happening to pass, he appealed to him—My Lord, were you satisfied with the behaviour of the 14th at Corunna? Of course I was, why ask the question? Because I am sure you will save this fine regiment the disgrace of garrison duty. The duke himself was fetched to inspect the men, and when they left the ground it was to the colonel's defiant word of command—Fourteenth to the front, quick march.'[2] And that was how the Bucks lads got their wish to share in all the honour and the suffering of those memorable days; so well did they bear themselves in this their first trial, that they were reported in a divisional order as having displayed 'a steadiness and gallantry becoming of veteran troops'; they had the word Waterloo inscribed on their colours. One of the first officers killed that day was Colonel Sir Francis D'Oyley, a distinguished descendant of an old Bucks family, connected with Stone and Hambleden.

A stranger after the battle picked up a fragment of a buff colour on the field and asked Colonel Tidy if he had lost it. 'That officer, almost riding the questioner down in his wrath, replied, No, Sir, the 14th never lose their colours!' It was remembered that the Marquess of Anglesey, who commanded the cavalry, passed through Bucks after the Battle of Waterloo, where he had left one leg behind him, and slept at the George Inn at Little Brickhill, a busy hostelry in those old coaching days. A few years later the Duke of Wellington passed through Aylesbury on his way to Stowe.

The third battalion of the 14th was disbanded in 1816; the colours of the three battalions hang in the hall at Claydon House. Sir Harry Calvert died there in 1827; Calvert station, in the county, on the Great Central Railway, is called after him.

In 1825 the 14th distinguished themselves in India under Lord Combermere at the siege of Bhurtpore, when they led one of the wings of the assault, and were chosen to garrison the fallen city. Matthew Morris, of Winslow, who died in 1849, had taken part in this siege and in all the battles in India to the end of that war.

The 14th kept the name of the county till, under the scheme of 1881, it received the title of the Prince of Wales's Own West Yorkshire Regiment, and Bucks recruits were attached thenceforward to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Regiment, the old 52nd.

The history of the Bucks Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, is a long and honourable one. There were large levies from the county under five captains to resist the threatened invasion of the Spanish Armada from 1585 onwards. There was much mustering of the militias during the Civil War, under the Commonwealth, and after the Restoration, in which the gentlemen of the county took an active share. In the early years of George III there was a revival of the Militia at Aylesbury, and John Wilkes became their colonel in 1762, but the next year he was dismissed by the king's desire, to the great regret of his brother officers and men, as Lord Temple expressed to him.

In 1779, when the French fleet was threatening our coasts, a Volunteer Corps was formed at Aylesbury of 150 light horsemen. A little later the Marquess of Buckingham raised and equipped a fine body of men, 'to be attached to their own county militia or to form a separate corps in case of invasion.' He gave the men 'brown cloaks with red collars made in London, and a leather roll as a cloak-case with a pocket for 2 shirts—made in Buckingham'. The Bucks Militia was the first to volunteer for foreign service during the French war, as the Duke of Buckingham reminded its successors, who, in 1864, were taking part in a grand review at Stowe, where the old colours of his grandfather's corps are preserved.

The excesses of the French Revolution, and the way in which the victorious French armies were overrunning Europe, caused great enthusiasm for the defence of the country; all classes were touched by it; even the 'mad dancing master of Newport Pagnell', Christopher Towles, boasted that young gentlemen who began to dance with him at twelve years' old were so agile and intelligent that they mastered the firelock and sword-drill as recruits in a year, better than those who had been a dozen years with the colours. This advertisement delighted the poet Cowper, 'the author,' he

writes, 'had the good hap to be crazed, or he had never produced anything half so clever.'

Sir William Young, of Delafude, Bucks, whose father had been Governor of Dominica in the West Indies, commanded the 1st Regiment of Bucks Yeomanry, for whom he published a book of instructions in 1797, and wrote a song, once well known :

> 'Yeomen attend, who sword in hand
> Stand forth your country's glory.'

At the short-lived peace of Amiens in 1802 many Bucks volunteers were so imbued with the martial spirit that they abandoned civil life, and joined the 85th Regiment, which was raised at Buckingham in 1793. The Bucks Yeomanry attended the coronation of George IV and the funeral of the Duke of York.

Ten years later they were needed for suppressing riots in 1830 and 1831 ; they were accustomed to act with the hearty sympathy of their fellow citizens, but in this distasteful task they were hooted and assaulted. At Oxford the rioters they had taken prisoners were rescued by the people at the fair ; and at Aylesbury the yeomanry were withdrawn at 3 a.m. to avoid further provocation. They formed a guard at Wotton House and at Waddesdon, till the neighbourhood became quieter.

In 1831, an old man, Hadland, died at Olney, aged eighty-three, who had served in the militia as a substitute for the poet Cowper.

A long period of peace abroad succeeded the great French war, important reforms were carried at home, and the accession of a maiden queen was accompanied by many happy omens.

Princess Victoria's first appearance in Bucks was as a girl of thirteen, when she passed through High Wycombe on her return from a visit to Oxford with her mother, the Duchess of Kent. In January 1845, the young Queen and Prince Albert were magnificently entertained at Stowe by the Duke of Buckingham, amid enthusiastic demonstrations of county loyalty. Mr. Nield, a gentleman who had lived in a miserly way at North Marston, died in 1852, and left his large fortune to the queen, who bought the Balmoral

estate with it, and built the castle. She contributed a window to North Marston Church.

The sudden outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854 was a rude shock to the hopes which had gradually grown up of a European peace that was never to be broken. The following reminiscence of this war was written specially for the children of Bucks, by an honoured Crimean veteran, General Sir George W. A. Higginson, G.C.B., of Gyldernscroft, Marlow, who was then acting as Adjutant of the 3rd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, in which regiment he served for thirty years. During the Crimean War he was twice promoted for service in the field. He commanded the Brigade of Guards and the Home District, 1879–84, was Lieut.-Governor of the Tower of London, 1888–93. As Governor of the Borlase Grammar School, Marlow, he has taken a great interest in this and other local matters.

General Higginson writes :

'France and England united in the Crimean War in resisting the ambitious designs of the Emperor Nicholas I against the Turkish Empire, and for the first time in history a combined army of French and British soldiers was dispatched to attack and destroy the great naval arsenal of the Russians on the Black Sea, Sebastopol. After a siege which lasted thirteen months, and during which the allied armies suffered hardships and privations which no pen could adequately describe, the great city was captured, the dockyard destroyed, and the supremacy of Russia in the Euxine annihilated. Three notable battles were fought during the campaign, the first soon after the landing in the Crimea at the Alma River ; subsequently a cavalry action at Balaklava, and a few days later a desperate contest on the heights of Inkerman. In all three the British soldiers maintained the reputation which many years previously they had gained in the Peninsula and at Waterloo under the great Duke of Wellington. Many acts of heroism and devotion to duty have been recorded by historians and others. One special instance which illustrates the spirit of the private soldier fell under my immediate notice. The allied armies had landed in the Crimea on the 14th September, 1854, after a tedious voyage across the Black Sea, during which the cholera, a violent

form of which terrible malady had caused many casualties in Bulgaria, still claimed many victims; nor did the complete change of scene and circumstances which our enterprise in landing on a hostile shore involved relieve us from this dangerous foe. On the morning of the 20th we rose from our bivouac and all ranks fell into their places fully aware that before us lay entrenched the Russian army under Prince Menschikoff, and that a decisive battle was imminent. As the different companies of my regiment took up their ground of formation I noticed a private soldier (let us call him Private Johnson) still sitting on the ground, though one of the smartest and most trustworthy of our men. I called to him peremptorily to "fall in". Receiving no reply I went up to him and at once recognized, in the blue-grey colour of his face, that the cholera had already betrayed the earliest symptoms. In vain did he make every effort to rise. His limbs, already rigid, defied every effort he made, and as no transport or conveyance of any kind could be obtained, my commanding officer decided to leave the poor fellow, giving him his rifle, ammunition, and knapsack, yet feeling that he lay at the mercy of any roving Cossack or the fatal termination of his physical sufferings. The order to advance was given, and with many a sad parting glance we left our comrade, seated on his knapsack, whose condition appeared to be hopeless. The forward movement of so large a force was necessarily slow, and as the undulations of the ground rose and fell we could notice the poor fellow a solitary speck in the distance, until the sound of heavy firing in our front and the excitement caused by the prospect of immediate engagement with the enemy dispelled all other thoughts. Ere long we were in action, and after fording the River Alma were started on the formidable ascent of the hill from which the Russian batteries and battalions were dealing heavy and destructive fire on our ranks. A slow and steady advance, a final rush, and the breastwork and battery were captured amid the cheers of victory; but the first man to spring through the nearest embrasure was our good comrade Johnson! The fact did not come to my knowledge till the battle was over, and the search for those who had fallen had begun. Unhurt, yet evidently again under the reaction of his malady, he related how that, on

hearing the first shots fired, and aware that the regiment of which he was so proud was about to be engaged, he contrived by a mighty effort to rise to his feet and follow us with ever-growing strength of resolution. He joined the ranks just before the final rush, and surely a more noble feat of arms was never accomplished. He was carried with the sick and wounded to the ships, and so to Constantinople, where in the Scutari hospital, soon to be reorganized under the never to be forgotten care of Florence Nightingale, he recovered, and on returning to England retired into civil life. We had many bold and brave men in our ranks ; none who showed a more indomitable spirit than the private soldier of whom this incident is recorded.'

In 1855, Mr. Stowe, *The Times* Commissioner, died in the hospital at Scutari, the son of Mr. W. Stowe, surgeon, at Buckingham.

The 14th Regiment joined in the assault on Sebastopol, and at the close of the war a Russian gun was given to Eton College.

A Bucks midshipman, Edmund Verney, was in all the naval engagements of the Crimean War under a splendid seaman, Captain McCleverty, in H.M S. *Terrible*, one of the (then) new paddle-wheel steamers, called by the Russians the Black Cat with the White Paws, in allusion to her black hull and two large white funnels. In the bombardment of Sebastopol, in October 1854, she fired the first shot and was the closest ship in-shore. The *Terrible* weathered the great November storm in the Black Sea, in which so many ships were lost, and took part in the various bombardments and assaults of Sebastopol, till in 1856 that bravely defended naval fortress lay in ruins, and the Russian Fleet at the bottom of the Black Sea. During the war Admiral Sir Charles Fremantle, son of Admiral Sir Thomas Fremantle of Aston Abbots, was in command of Balaclava Harbour, and devoted himself to the care of the sick and wounded of the Fleet. He kept a great store of novels for those well enough to read, and a constant succession of convalescents were entertained as his guests on board the *Leander*.

Scarcely had England recovered from the Crimean War than the far more terrible news of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 burst upon the country, and Edmund Verney served

as a sub-lieutenant in the *Shannon's* Naval Brigade, which, under Sir William Peel, relieved Lucknow so gallantly. Verney was twice specially mentioned in dispatches, and promoted ; and brought the King of Oude's flag and other trophies home to Claydon.

One of a family that has furnished many distinguished naval men to the county is Admiral the Hon. Sir Edmund Fremantle, fourth son of the first Baron Cottesloe, of Swanbourne. The grandson of one of Nelson's captains, and nephew of Sir Charles Fremantle before-named, he entered the Navy in 1849, and in the course of half a century of active service he has seen the great change from the wooden ship to the ironclad, from sails to steam. He has given us a series of pictures of the service in *The Navy as I have known it*, which he published in 1904. Sir Edmund Fremantle has served in all parts of the world, but the most exciting incidents in his career are connected with the Ashanti War on the West Coast of Africa, 1873–4, when as a Junior Captain in command of H.M.S. *Barracouta* he acted as Senior Naval Officer for some months at a very critical time. An army of some 40,000 Ashantis were threatening the English forts, and attacking the tribes friendly to us. 'They were lithe, active men who wore little clothing, darker in colour, and rather smaller than the coast tribes.'[3] They were brave fighters and well disciplined. The troops on shore were a West Indian Regiment and some Houssas, so the only white men available were the bluejackets and marines of the fleet.

A war on the West Coast of Africa, in a climate more fatal to white men than the fiercest enemy, must always be an anxious undertaking. To march inland is to traverse foul, malarial swamps, and thick bush, where natives lie concealed like snakes in grass, in a damp heat which takes all the heart out of a man ; there are no proper harbours, and the ships at anchor roll incessantly, landing is dangerous owing to the surf, and in many places impossible. Under these perilous and difficult conditions the small body of sailors and marines, under Captain Fremantle and Colonel Festing, completely defeated a large force of Ashantis at Elmina, and this first engagement of the war had a great moral effect, and was won with very little loss on our side. There was

a good deal more desultory fighting, and a few months later Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent out as General and Administrator, and an advance was made through jungle and swamp to a village called Essaman, where Captain Fremantle was severely wounded in the arm. He was bandaged up, and remained in command of his sailors, and the village was carried. When the march was resumed, being faint from loss of blood, he was put into one of the few hammocks available, but passing his steward lying by the side of the path insensible from sunstroke, Captain Fremantle insisted upon yielding his place to him, and marched with his blue-jackets for the rest of the day.

During the whole campaign, which ended in the taking of Coomassie by Wolseley, officers and men suffered terribly from fever, from the transport difficulty, and from the impenetrable nature of the country, but at last soldiers and sailors were able to return home. At Madeira the *Barracouta* received the news of a vote of thanks accorded to the forces by both Houses of Parliament, in which Captain Fremantle was mentioned by name ; he received various honours from his sovereign. Admiral Sir Edmund Fremantle was Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies, in China, and at Plymouth, and retired in 1901, after fifty-two years on the Active List.

The War in Egypt in 1882 was the occasion of an act of gallantry and humanity by a Bucks naval officer, which deserves to be remembered. The town of Alexandria was in an uproar, Arabi Pasha had revolted against the Khedive, and the foreign inhabitants were in terror. The English fleet was in the harbour awaiting events ; H.M.S. *Monarch*, commanded by Captain Fairfax, being at anchor nearest to the shore. Keen eyes on board noticed that the guns of the Egyptian forts were carefully pointed upon her ; so silently when night fell she slipped her cable, and took up another position. The next day, June 11, 1882, the storm burst ; there was fierce fighting in the streets, and boatloads of fugitives of all nationalities were anxious to take refuge in English ships. Our men-of-war were bombarding the forts, and a chance shell from H.M.S. *Sultan*, aimed at a fort, entered the lighthouse and exploded inside of it, tearing away the staircase and wrecking the middle of the tower.

At sunset the white flag was hoisted over the town, and one after another the forts were silent; but the famous lighthouse was dark, and all the ships coming along that shallow, dangerous shore were in peril of shipwreck. Then it was that the First Lieutenant of the *Monarch*, William Pigott, asked his captain's leave to go on a desperate errand. Choosing only one bluejacket, named Curry, whom he knew as a man of sure foot and cool head, and taking with them some rope and string, matches, hammer, and nails, the two men cautiously made their way up the broken masonry of the ruined lighthouse. It was an ascent of great difficulty and danger; the stones tumbled about their heads and gave way under their feet; Lieutenant Pigott as the lightest and nimblest of the two generally led the way, and by getting a rope to hold here, and making a spring there, they succeeded in reaching the platform on the top, which was quite intact. They found the lamp trimmed and ready, mastered its mechanism, and in a very short time the friendly revolving light was flashing out to sea again; but the lamp needed tending as well as lighting, and for two nights and a day these gallant sailors stuck to their post. Communications had been established by signal with the *Monarch*, a rope ladder was made on board, but no other man would attempt the ascent, and food was sent up the lighthouse by the rope which Pigott had lowered. It was long before it could be made safe enough for the Frenchman who had been in charge to venture up the tower again. Lieutenant Pigott was specially mentioned in dispatches, and promoted; his chief anxiety was that his comrade Curry should receive his full share of the credit and rewards. In his old house at Doddershall near Quainton (which is entering on the ninth century of its existence as the home of the same family) Admiral Pigott has a great copper vessel in which Arabi's cartridges were made, and a clock whose works he picked up in a street of Alexandria, which had been blown out of their case and through a mud-wall without being injured.

In the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir in the following September (1882), General Philip Smith, of Wendover, commanded the Brigade of Guards.

A 'great Bucks soldier, whose career is associated with

the Egyptian campaigns, is Lord Grenfell, of Butler's Court, Beaconsfield. After serving in the Kaffir, Zulu, and Transvaal Wars, he distinguished himself in Egypt in 1882 and 1884; and became Sirdar of the Egyptian Forces, 1885–92, and again in 1897–8; he has since commanded the 4th Army Corps in 1903–4. Lord Grenfell comes of a family distinguished for financial and administrative ability; originally Cornish, but settled at Taplow since the end of the eighteenth century.

The close of Queen Victoria's long and brilliant reign was darkened by the South African War, and she deeply mourned the loss of many young and gallant men. Once again Bucks was ready and eager to offer her best sons as soldiers of the Queen, and one of the most popular men in the county, Charles Compton William Cavendish, third Baron Chesham, commanded the Imperial Yeomanry in the Boer War. Born in 1850, and educated at Eton, he served first in the Coldstream Guards, then with the 10th Hussars in India, and with the 16th Lancers. On his retirement in 1879, he joined the Royal Bucks Hussars, and in 1889 became their colonel. He was a born leader, with a fine presence; he had the gift of remembering faces, and a charming courtesy of manner which endeared him to gentle and simple alike. As Master of the Bicester Hounds, from 1885 to 1893, Lord Chesham was as familiar a figure in North Bucks as he was round his own beautiful home at Latimer.

When the Boer War broke out his eldest son served as second lieutenant of the 17th Lancers. After the 'black week' of disasters, in 1899, which filled so many English homes with mourning, it was to Lord Chesham that the Government turned to organize a new force of Imperial Yeomanry, which he did with conspicuous success. He went out to South Africa in January, 1900, in command of the 10th battalion, which contained two Bucks companies, and on arrival he was given the command of the whole Yeomanry Brigade. He was twice specially mentioned in dispatches by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, as commanding the force he had so largely created 'with distinction and dash'. During this campaign Lord Chesham had the bitter sorrow of losing his son, Lieutenant C.

Cavendish, who met a soldier's death at Diamond Hill near Pretoria, June 11, 1900. It does not appear that the father and son ever met during the war.

On his return from the front he became Inspector-General of Yeomanry, and devoted all his enthusiasm and experience to this work. Lord Chesham is the only instance of a man being given General Officer's rank from the auxiliary forces. In July, 1901, King Edward made him a K.C.B., and the people of Buckingham and his old comrades gave him a magnificent reception, an address, and a sword of honour. Reference was made to Lady Chesham's services in nursing the wounded at Deelfontein. At a subsequent banquet, when replying to the toast of his health, he insisted that every Yeoman present should stand up also; it was only with them, and as one of them, that he would accept any honours. Officers and men sprang to their feet amidst loud cheers. Lord Chesham recalled how on the march to Oliphant's Nek they fought every day for seven days, and had only one day's rest, and how having reached the top of the Nek they had two days' continuous fighting.

This gallant life was ended in a moment by a hunting accident, in 1907, when Lord Chesham was still in the full vigour of his fifty-seventh year.

On Beacon Hill, a grassy point of the Chilterns, a monument has been erected to the officers and men who fell in the Boer War; their names are also inscribed on a bronze tablet in the County Hall at Aylesbury. Outside this, and facing the Market Square, is a simple statue of Lord Chesham in hunting dress, as he was familiarly known among his neighbours.

[1] Hon. T. F. Fremantle's MS. Notes.
[2] *Recollections of the Earl of Albemarle.*
[3] Admiral the Hon. Sir E. Fremantle, *The Navy as I have known it.*

CHAPTER XXV

OF BUCKS DOCTORS AND THE LADY OF THE LAMP

No sketch of Bucks biographies would be complete without at least a glimpse at the long line of physicians and surgeons of the county who have been eminent for skill and devotion.

We are accustomed in literature and art to the traditional figure of St. Peter with his keys of the world beyond—but here and now it is the followers of St. Luke that stand on guard for us at the portals of Life and Death, therefore let us give them honour due. We have a long roll of names from Roger of Wendover (already mentioned) soothing the deathbed of a Pope in the thirteenth century, down to Sir Thomas Barlow, K.C.V.O., President of the Royal College of Physicians, now living at Wendover, who ministered to Queen Victoria and to Florence Nightingale in the helpless hours of old age and death.

Alike in their devotion to the sick, the doctors have been men of very different tastes and ability. There have been philosophers and theologians who have recognized (like Shakespeare's physician in *Macbeth*) the strange influence of the mind upon health, or like Dr. John Smith (1630–1679), who wrote a *Portrait of Old Age*, which he called 'a Sacred Anatomy of Soul and Body', tracing the influence of each upon the other.

A fine scholar of Elizabeth's reign was Thomas D'Oyly, M.D., of Greenlands, Hambleden, whose mother had been one of the Queen's Maids of Honour; besides physic and astronomy he had studied languages, and was one of the authors of a dictionary and grammar, which became standard works for the study of Spanish.

Some doctors were great men socially, like Sir Thomas Clayton, of the Vache, Chalfont, M.D. and M.P., who was Cromwell's nominee for Oxford in Barebones' Parliament, and used his power as a magistrate to throw Quakers into prison, as Elwood and his friends had good reason to know.

Others, like William Parker, M.D., without powerful friends, were amongst the oppressed. As a Puritan, Dr. Parker was thrown into Aylesbury Gaol in 1665, when it was a hotbed of the plague, but removed at last to Wycombe, by his wife's entreaties on his behalf.

Others have been naturalists, like Dr. Martin Lister of Radcliffe (1638–1712), who collected one thousand varieties of shells, which he gave to the Ashmolean Museum; and wrote a book about them, the drawings for which were made by his two daughters, Susannah and Anne. Some were astrologers, like Dr. Robert Napier (1589–1634), Rector of Great Linford, who was ready to deal with soul and body, to foretell his patient's fate, and to dispense amulets and charms. Many were book-lovers and book-collectors, like the versatile and universally accomplished Dr. John Radcliffe, physician to William and Mary and Anne; founder of the Radcliffe Library, the Radcliffe Observatory, and the Radcliffe Infirmary, who has this threefold claim on the gratitude of posterity. He was M.P. for Buckingham in 1713.

A physician's fees in the seventeenth century were large, and the medicines compounded by his apothecary were very bulky and often incredibly nasty; Mrs. Isham, one of the Dentons of Hillesden, complains of 'a stinking balsam as would choke a dog to take it'.[1] The physic arrives in great bottles marked Liquor A and Liquor B, and a lady in the Verney letters describes her husband as taking twenty pills, and feeling relief after the sixteenth.'

Surgeons and apothecaries were held to belong to a lower social grade than physicians. There is an outrageous story told as late as 1721, of an irascible baronet, Sir John Wittewronge, of Stantonbury (1695–1743), son of the member for Aylesbury in 1702 and 1705, who picked a quarrel with a surgeon, Griffiths, at the Saracen's Inn, Newport Pagnell. He insolently announced that 'such fellows should not act the gentleman, the man being dressed like a physician, with a sword and other fopperies'.[2] The quarrel ended in the surgeon's death; Wittewronge was outlawed for it, and proved his own extreme gentility by contracting heavy debts and dying in the Fleet prison. Dr. Laurence Wright, physician to Cromwell, who held

a distinguished office in the College of Physicians, was desirous that his only son should make a fashionable marriage; he was able to give him a large fortune, and the young man was 'tall, slender and handsome, gallant, civil withall, and religious'. Sir Ralph Verney recommended him as a suitor to his Royalist friend, Sir Justinian Isham; but the father was of opinion 'that the gentry had need to make a bank and bulwark against that Sea of Democracy which is overrunning them', and the daughter would have nothing to do with 'a gilded pill'.[1]

Probably in this case the prejudice was chiefly political, for, as a matter of fact, physicians were held in high esteem.

George Bate, M.D. (1608–1669), has been called a medical Vicar of Bray. He was born at Maids Morton, and when he had become a famous London doctor, he was ever ready to help his Bucks neighbours, either professionally in consultation, or by lending money to the impoverished squires. He had amassed great wealth, and appreciated a good dinner; indeed, when he announced his intention of dining at Hillesden, Edmund Denton sent over in great haste to borrow the Claydon cook and half a dozen pigeons. But he never lost his active figure; 'as lean as a death's head or Dr. Bate' was a saying among his friends.

Dr. Bate had a large practice 'among precise and puritanical people', and was Cromwell's physician, but when precise people went out of fashion, he prescribed for Charles II with equal good will.

A more interesting character was Dr. Martin Lluelyn (1616–1682), a poet and a soldier before he studied medicine. His poems, 'Lluelyn's Marrow of the Muses',[3] went through several editions. After fighting for Charles I he was ejected from the University of Oxford, and became a doctor. In this capacity he attended his fallen master to the last, as far as he was permitted to do so, and received his gloves as a souvenir.

After the Restoration he both doctored Charles II and wrote verses about him. In 1664 he settled at High Wycombe, in the Dial House, now occupied by Dr. Wheeler. He was much esteemed as 'an eminent and learned physician, and as a man of singular integrity of life and manners, and of the most comely and decent gravity and deportment'.

He became a county magistrate, and was Mayor of Wycombe in 1671. When the borough wished to approach the King in 1681, Dr. Lluelyn was felt at once to be the proper person to carry the loyal address to Windsor. He died and was buried at Wycombe. He left three clever sons: Martin, a soldier; Richard, a barrister; and George, a musician and composer, a friend of Purcell's, who took Orders, and adhering to his father's opinions, was called by the Whigs 'a Jacobitical, musical, mad Welsh parson'.

In this most interesting seventeenth century, when the science of healing was making immense strides, the Bucks doctor of whom we know most is William Denton of Hillesden (1605–1691). He kept up an intimate correspondence for some sixty years with his nephew, Sir Ralph Verney, and his letters, in a small, neat hand, concisely and often wittily expressed, are still at Claydon House. Dr. Denton was educated at Oxford; he was connected by blood with most of the county families, and by ties of friendship with them all. 'Unwearied in his devotion to the sick and suffering, so little hardened by familiarity that he could never attend a death-bed without being deeply moved, the trusted adviser and reconciler in many dark hours of family history, with a large hopefulness and toleration born of his wide acquaintance with human nature, a caustic tongue, and a generous heart, he maintained the high traditions of his noble profession.'[1] The Wenmans, whose fine monuments are in Twyford Church, were amongst Dr. Denton's many patients. He talks of putting 'my Lord and my Lady into physic', as one would refer to a spring-cleaning: 'My Lord was vomited to-day and until I have settled them both, I cannot with any conveniency stir any whither.'

Dr. Denton's home was in London, but he was so often in request in Bucks, that he passed much time in what he called his 'Manors of Claydon, Hillesden, and Stowe'. He was anxious to be abreast of all the learning of his time, and desired to consult medical books from Rome, Messina, Spain, and the Low Countries. He got surgical instruments from Paris, 'the French know best how to polish them'; scissors from Brussels, and lancets from Florence, with handles of buffalo-horn. Quinine is

very scarce and dear, the doctor gets what he can of it, but he is ready to find his *materia medica* close at hand if need be. When a groom is ill at Claydon, and a valuable colt also, he gives the horse 'a groundsel purge', and the man 'a stonecrop vomit', both to be gathered in the old courtyard. Up to the age of forty-five Dr. Denton made his long journeys on horseback; after that he took to a coach, which proved a perpetual trouble to him. Two or three extra horses are required in winter 'to pull him through the dirt from Aylesbury', the coachman gets an ague, or a horse falls lame; and the coach has to be left behind at Claydon. 'If mouldy,' writes Dr. Denton to Sir Ralph, 'I know you are so cleanly a person as to get it wiped.'

Dr. Denton's activity lasted to the age of eighty-six; he rejoiced in the accession of William and Mary, and wrote a treatise vindicating the Revolution of 1688. He was buried at Hillesden, 'Mr. Bank of Preston preached his funeral sermon;' his very epitaph has the joyful note which was so conspicuous in his life—'He was blessed with that happy composition of body and mind that preserved him cheerful, easy and agreeable to the last, and endeared him to all that knew him.'

Dr. Thomas Willis, M.D. (1621–1675), was a devoted Royalist and churchman. Having made a fortune, he purchased Whaddon Hall. His only son, Browne Willis, was chosen as member for Buckingham in 1705, when he bought a cloak of blue cloth, which he continued to wear for fifty years. He became an antiquary and local historian, a zealous restorer of churches, and a well-known figure in Fenny Stratford and the neighbourhood.

Sir Samuel Garth, M.D. (1661–1719), was a fashionable physician and poet, much sought after for his witty conversation and literary talent. 'He was a great admirer of Marlborough, by whose sword he was knighted.' He owned the Manor of Edgcott, but preferred town life.

Dr. Friend, M.D., F.R.S. (1675–1728), had property at Hitcham, which descended to his son. He was Chemical Professor at Oxford, and went with the Earl of Peterborough to Spain as physician to the army; he published a *History of Physic*. He was patronized by Tories and Jacobites, as Mead (another famous doctor connected with Bucks) was

Dr. William Denton, Physician to Charles I
From a picture at Claydon House

by Whigs and Hanoverians, and a pleasant story is told of these professional rivals when party spirit was very bitter. Friend was an M.P. in 1722, and when Atterbury was imprisoned, he was also sent to the Tower on suspicion. Dr. Mead at once offered to attend Dr. Friend's disconcerted patients, at the risk of becoming unpopular with his own; and handed over all their fees to Friend on his release. He became physician to Queen Caroline in 1727, and was buried in Hitcham Church.

A great and beneficent figure at Aylesbury and the neighbourhood in Victoria's reign was the surgeon and sanitary reformer, Robert Ceely (b. before 1800, d. 1880). During a terrible visitation of cholera in 1832, his services to Aylesbury were quite invaluable. His cheerful and brave spirit made his presence the best cordial in sickness and trouble. With Dr. John Lee, of Hartwell, and Sir Harry Verney, of Claydon, Mr. Ceely laboured for years to found a county hospital at Aylesbury; and when it was established he gave his professional services ungrudgingly to make it a success.

Sir Henry W. Acland (1815–1900), Bart., M.D., Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, was well known and beloved in Bucks. His services to science and medical education belong to the history of Oxford and of the profession; but he was a pioneer of the Rural Housing Movement, and keen about district nursing and the sanitation of villages. As Master of Ewelme Hospital and Trustee of the Charity, he was able to transform Marsh Gibbon by building a series of first-rate cottages to replace some miserable hovels; and his writings on village health and village life were widely read. Sir Henry was an accomplished musician and artist, and whatever he took in hand he impressed with a touch of genius, grace, and beauty. He was a close friend of John Ruskin and of Florence Nightingale.

The last of these slight sketches of Bucks doctors must be devoted to the grateful recollection of a general practitioner in a country neighbourhood, who gave his remarkable abilities and all his strength to the public good; and died worn out by work which asked neither for personal recognition nor reward, but only that it should bear fruit.

George De'Ath (1861–1901) inherited his father's, Mr.

Robert De'Ath's, large practice of some thirty years' standing, in Buckingham. He had had the advantage as a boy of a wider outlook than his native town afforded. Like Cowper, he was educated at Westminster, and he took full advantage of the old privileges of the School in connexion with the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. He loved music and architecture, and took the keenest interest in politics. His brilliant dramatic gift, and his skill as a speaker and debater were developed early, indeed he was known as the boy-politician, and many of his school friendships endured through life. He distinguished himself at Guy's Hospital, and at the age of twenty-five his father's sudden death threw upon him the whole responsibility of the laborious profession of a country doctor, in great request over a large area.

He wrote with ease and grace, but his daily work gave him little leisure for anything outside it. He was passionately desirous of improving the condition of cottage homes, and of making Buckingham ' one of the healthiest, cleanest, and most attractive towns in the country ', and he used his influence as Medical Officer of Health, and Coroner of the Winslow Division with enthusiasm in this direction. A friend writes of him : ' The thing which always struck me about Dr. De'Ath was the untiring energy with which he dealt with problems of hygiene and sanitation. I do not know of any branch of medical and surgical work that he was specially distinguished in, but as an all-round practitioner he had no equal.' He gave much time and thought to rural district nursing, in connexion with the Nursing Home built by Lord and Lady Addington in Buckingham.

Death came to him at the age of thirty-nine, hastened by the overstrain of continual work, but his example is one of those influences which raise and build up the whole community.

Physicians and surgeons could not carry on their beneficent work effectually while the daily care of the sick was committed to casual and ignorant attendants. The raising of nursing into a skilled profession, demanding discipline, training, and the utmost devotion of educated women, was started by Florence Nightingale during the misery and confusion attendant on the Crimean War, when nursing by

women outside a few Roman Catholic sisterhoods was as she said, 'unspeakable'. She would quote a saying of Lord Melbourne's. 'I would rather have men about me when I am ill. I think it requires very strong health to put up with women.' Her example and teaching created a new type of nurse, strong, capable, gentle, efficient, and silent; and Miss Nightingale showed how worthy such a nurse was to be held in honour, and well rewarded. Indirectly Miss Nightingale's influence has entirely changed public opinion as to paid work for women. She would never recognize class distinctions; a woman must be 'sober, honest, and truthful, without which there is no foundation on which to build', but with this foundation no gifts of genius, beauty, or wealth were too good to be dedicated to the service of the sick, and very specially of the sick poor.

By the marriage of her only sister, Parthenope, to Sir Harry Verney, in 1858, Florence Nightingale found a second home at Claydon, and identified herself at once with the interests of the county. In 1861 the Buckingham and Winslow Volunteers met in Claydon Park, and soon after this Miss Nightingale wrote to Sir Harry Verney, October 8, 1861: 'It was whispered to me in Sydney Herbert's time that Buck-shire had been behindhand in her tribute of Volunteers. Is that the case now? I hope not. But if so it makes those that *have* volunteered the more noble. If I might venture . . . I would gladly ask you to offer them from me a pair of colours. Probably, however, they have these. If so, I can only offer them from the bottom of my heart the best wishes of one who has "fought the good fight" for the army, seven years this very month, without the intermission of a single waking hour.' Miss Nightingale's contribution eventually took the form of a cup to be shot for.

In 1861 Lady Verney laid the foundation-stone of the Aylesbury Hospital, in which her sister Florence took a deep interest. In this same year a clergyman's daughter, Dorothy Pattison, fired by Miss Nightingale's example to do some public work, became the schoolmistress of Little Woolstone; she took up nursing later on, and, as Sister Dora, became the heroine of the Black Country.

The fund subscribed by the nation as a tribute to Miss Nightingale's work was devoted by her to founding a

Training Home for Nurses, in connexion with the re-opening of St. Thomas's Hospital, in fine new buildings. Miss Nightingale kept up affectionate personal relations with the matron, sisters, and nurses of the Hospital, and it was long a yearly fête in the Nightingale Home, when the probationers, with the Home Sister in charge, came down for a long day to the Claydons. A summer afternoon was spent in the woods, and they returned to Claydon House laden with wild flowers, to be welcomed by her whom they loved to call their 'Mother-Chief'. Her sympathy was to be the inspiration of many an arduous and devoted career of her probationers in after years, in hospitals and workhouses, in the slums of our old cities, and in nursing centres newly started all over the world.

Later on Florence Nightingale's thoughts were more and more directed to the prevention of sickness, and the teaching of health, what she called the 'Civil and Military Science of Life and Death'. In 1892, in connexion with the Bucks County Council she started three qualified ladies as health missioners, to give instruction and advice to mothers on the care and preservation of health from infancy onwards. In these efforts she was warmly supported by Mr. Frederick Verney, Chairman of the Technical Education Committee, by Dr. George De'Ath of Buckingham, and by other medical men. Her sympathy with the cottage mothers was very close and tender, and her admiration of their devotion and self-denial most sincere.

Miss Nightingale was full of sympathy for the experiment that was being tried in the Claydons of having Village Free Libraries on the rates; she contributed £50 to buy books for Steeple Claydon, and threw her heart into all that could make rural life more interesting. 'Success will be slow,' she wrote in 1897, 'but what ripens too fast, what is forced, is not what lasts the longest. The people must always be the most essential part of our machinery.'

Her love for all living things was specially shown to the birds in winter; the children at Claydon House were constantly bidden by 'Aunt Florence' to hang up mutton bones for them in the frost. Urgent little pencil notes would come down to them when she was confined to her bedroom: 'The Tom-tits have sent to me a Deputation

MISS FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AND HER NURSES AT CLAYDON HOUSE
From a photograph by Colonel Lloyd-Verney, reproduced by permission of Mrs. Lloyd-Verney

headed by the little one who, if it were to take off its clothes, would find a roomy dwelling in a walnut. They state that two gigantic black parties, called, they believe, rooks, have feloniously carried off their two best bones—Haste for thy life, post, haste.'

On May 12, 1910, Florence Nightingale reached her ninetieth birthday; on August 13, 1910, she passed peacefully away in sleep, at the London house, No. 10, South Street, Park Lane, which had for many years been her home.

While a great memorial service was being held in St. Paul's Cathedral, thronged by nurses and soldiers and some of the chief people of the realm, her own directions as to an absolutely simple, private funeral were being carried out in the village churchyard of Wellow, Hants, where her parents are buried.

Few of the conventional signs of grief were displayed; a little band of about a dozen mourners stood round the grave, in heavy rain; her own soft, white shawl was the only pall; and the coffin was borne and lowered into the grave by Guardsmen in scarlet uniforms, whose dress and bearing always reminded her affectionately of Inkerman Day.

Claydon was represented there by Mr. Frederick Verney, M.P. for North Bucks, and his nephew, Sir Harry Verney.

'On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
A light its ray shall cast
From portals of the past.
A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land. . . .'

. . . . . .

And so the long procession passes on and out of sight; king, queen, saint, bishop, crusader, martyr, poet, statesman, teacher, soldier, physician, nurse, serving the county in their generation bravely and well.

The work changes and demands new workers,

'Who follows in their train?'

[1] *Verney Memoirs.* [2] Gough MSS. [3] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

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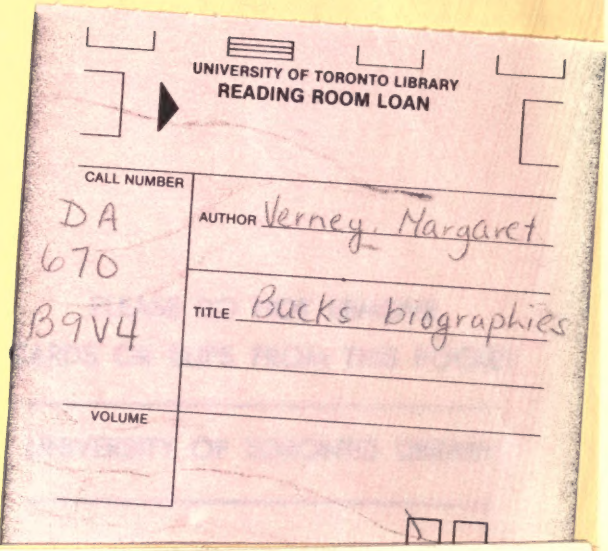

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